

Thirdness and its bearings on students' views of the 'Other': Tying the knot between the literary and the intercultural

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Abstract: *Admittedly, English language teaching philosophy should not include preaching about linguistic and communicative skills solely. The shortcomings of the preceding approaches result in students being unable to solve problems of cultural clashes, probable to take place in learning English. Hence, the insertion of the intercultural paradigm as a new educational philosophy facilitates the process of discovering other foreign cultural dimensions and enjoying that cultural difference most importantly. It gives for urging students to get along with the calls of active learning in creating a third space of interculturality from which to consider the other. The world of literature is a perfect depiction of the sociocultural realities of people and so it offers a short path through the way of learning about certain social conducts that were up till then alien. Equipping students with aspects of thirdness will help them develop positive perceptions towards the content being read in English. This paper provides the theoretical background that led to the inclusion of the concept of thirdness with its relation to language and literary text. It also suggests some classroom activities for the sake of fostering a positive stance towards the foreign culture.*

Keywords: *culture, intercultural competence, thirdness, literary texts, literary analysis.*

Résumé : *Certes, l'enseignement de l'anglais ne doit pas seulement focaliser sur les compétences linguistiques et communicatives. Les insuffisances des approches antérieures entraînent une incapacité de résoudre les problèmes de conflits culturels qui peuvent avoir lieu pendant l'apprentissage. Donc, l'insertion du paradigme interculturel comme étant une nouvelle philosophie facilite le processus de découvrir d'autres dimensions culturelles et d'en profiter à la fois. Il rassure que les étudiants peuvent eux-mêmes créer activement un troisième espace d'interculturel à partir duquel ils tiennent compte de l'autre. Le monde de la littérature offre une représentation typique des réalités socioculturelles d'autres peuples, c'est un bref chemin simplifiant la connaissance de certains comportements sociaux inconnus pour les*

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étudiants. Or, exposer les étudiants à ces aspects va les aider à développer des perceptions positives à l'égard du contenu en cours d'analyse. Cet article montre le contexte théorique qui a mené à l'intégration de la notion de la troisième culture en rapport étroit à la langue ainsi que le texte littéraire. Il propose enfin quelques activités qui servent à favoriser une attitude positive vis-à-vis de l'autre culture.

Mots clés : *culture, compétence interculturelle, troisième culture, textes littéraires, analyse littéraire.*

1. Introduction

Incorporating culture in the foreign language (FL) class is a fairly recent novelty in the field of language teaching. As a matter of fact, the cultural element fused within language has grown as a flavouring ingredient of the teaching process. This was the ultimate result of a reshaping of the pillars of communicative approach. Instead of focusing on the native speaker standard as the sole aim, the move shifted towards leaning on the relevance of the sociocultural identity of the FL students. The result was the introduction of the third place concept said to soften the gap between both cultures. This new tendency visualizes a must to develop cultural alertness in FL teaching setting for the sake of achieving optimal results (Porto, 2010). Within the realm of the intercultural, students are not only meant to be aware of the cultural difference but also to actively develop a sphere of interculturality by plunging themselves into the native speakers' perspectives. According to Bredella (2003), this helps standardizing the cultural view towards the other.

One way of concretizing this skill is through the use of literary texts already available for ready use via different means. Loaded with cultural snippets as they are, these tools allow for a detailed depiction of the day to day life of native speakers. Besides, when students are trained as intercultural agents, they will put on a normal footing their stereotyped views about the native speaker's sociocultural features.

Within the boundaries of this perspective, the present article is meant to shed light on some theoretical grounds in relation to the concept of culture and the intercultural and their bearings in developing positive perceptions towards the native speaker via the medium of literary text analysis. It culminates with forwarding some classroom activities that if coupled with the implantation of intercultural competence would result in advancing positive stances towards the other.

2. Culture: thoughts about a critical

The term culture has been approached differently in the literature. As a multilayered concept, it is interwoven within the very tissue of everyday life to reflect race, ethnicity, identity, and yet nationality. Roughly, it pictures a social group's particular features amid which art, food and shared traditions. With its multifarious sides, culture grows as one of the complex words in English terminology. Attaching the term a definition was the byproduct of years of observation as to how societies are built, hang together and interact, and the way they shape speculations about other worlds. For some researchers, one needs to be cautious in dealing with the concept because of the connotations it has in the common speech (Holliday, 1994; Scollen & Scollen, 2001). By reason of this fact, it is fair to step into Hinkel's (1999:01) shoes that there exists: "*as many definitions of culture as there are field of inquiry into human societies, groups, systems, behaviours, and activities*".

The early attempts to include culture in FL teaching relied on a frigid representation of facts, figures and achievements recounted in books of history. Moreover, hints about

big C culture, reflected in literature and arts, and small c culture, reflected in communities' traditions and norms, were of probable occurrence (Halverson cited in Moran, 2001).

The first approaches tend to lean on the behavioural aspects of the social group rather, hence for Ibrahim Haijal (2004:239) sums up: *“the accepted and patterned ways of behaviour of a given people”*. The pioneering trials to demystify the meaning of the term culture are traced back to the work of Kroeber and Kluckhohn (1952) who think of it as the implicit and explicit manmade adjustable behaviour. Hence, it is a learnt symbolic system. For Barret, it constitutes: *“the body of learned beliefs, traditions and guides for behaviour that are shared among members of any human society”* (cited in Hollins, 1996:18).

In order for culture to resist through time, these traditions are to be taught and acquired; for Carter (2000) these values represent thought schemes and for Velkley (2002) they stand for the social identity. Conversely, those societal regulations are not that stable for each generation is associated with newly emerging practices. In this way, culture denotes the ever-changing norms and sociopolitical relations of a group of people linked by common historical, geographical and linguistic factors (Nieto, 1992).

Thoughts about cultural dynamicity originated in the work of Crozet and Liddicoat (1997:05) who claimed that *“culture is not a static, monolithic construct. It is dynamic and both creates and is created by every attempt to communicate”*. Therefore, the very need of humans to jump into interpersonal contacts generates new cultural ingredients. This entails the reshaping of views towards the concept of otherness since humans exit in collectivity that is *“culture involves the totality of attitudes towards the world, towards events, other cultures and peoples and the manner in which the attitudes are mediated”* (Faiq, 2004:01).

Recent views of the term tried a mingling of conceptions and prefer a synthesis of the ways of life mixed with the intellectual activity, so culture sums up both the humanistic perspective and the anthropological perspective.

3. Values of integrating culture teaching

The top reason for the inclusion of culture within educational ideology is globalization with its effect in bringing under one umbrella people originating from varying cultural backgrounds. The early approaches to FL teaching agreed upon the common point of leaning on the linguistic side only, but focusing on grammar solely proved insufficient. It is not possible to teach a FL without mentioning at least a snippet of its culture (Quirk et al., 1985). Language is primarily used for communication and simply communication occurs in appropriate sociocultural context. The purpose of an intercultural approach is mainly to help students experience a sense of otherness and so to function appropriately within a different segment of another community (Council of Europe, 2001; Seelye, 1993).

Considerations of culture teaching were seriously questioned a while after the implementation of the communicative approach. In fact, working with culture in the class gives for improving students' linguistic abilities (Seago, 2000; Bada, 2000). Contextual features are paramount in the execution of any linguistic code; teaching culture helps raising students' motivation because it provides them with a concrete system of reference. For instance, literary texts are better digested by students when the social contour is

figured out (Kitao, 1991; Tomalin & Stempleski, 1993). Culture is not a stretched fifth skill but it is an indispensable factor present at every moment and integrated within the very tissue of language instruction (Kramersch, 1993). To wrap up, under any circumstance language teaching is culture teaching.

3.1. Culture as a motivating impulse to nurture positive attitudes

Psychological educationalists debate ceaselessly about the import of raising and sustaining students' motivation for the sake of the success of the teaching learning process. Previous approaches relied heavily on declarative superficial knowledge in a step to plant competence. Then again, this resulted in shallow teaching atmosphere. Phrasing Biggs (1995), students' motivation is triggered when they are exposed to meaningful entities that can be better exhibited by reference to cultural verities. For constructivists, learning is motivating when it calls first for things present in the students' cultural background. Consequently, FL learning should be seen as a social activity based on learners' past experiences (Bruner, 1990; Hudley & Gottfried, 2008). From this angle, it extols students' native culture. Added to this, a worthwhile reading says that culture can fuel students' perceptions and endorse their inter-lingual competence (Domoney & Harris, 1993). It is undisputable that language and its culture are interconnected, upon this nexus Robinson and Nocon (1996) theorize that ethnographic teaching coupled with face to face contact can positively influence learners to study. Motivation to endorse the intercultural may; hence; include self-awareness, sociolinguistic awareness as well as critical observations of FL cultural features.

4. Dialectics between culture and language

Linguists, anthropologists, culturists as well as FL teachers sought to explain how cultural factors influence human communication. Throughout the history of anthropological studies, culture has been coupled with language both being intersected. Language does not stand separately from the socially inherited habits that weave people's daily life (Thanasoulas, 2001). If culture is a learnt system of social behaviours then language being the medium of that transfer is part of culture. Language is often seen as a decipherer of cultural meanings (Spradley, 1979).

It is burdened then with cultural snippets since the day to day exchanges are embodied in well-defined socio cultural contours. Fantini (1997:04), in this regard, retorts that *"language and culture are dimensions of each other, interrelated and inseparable"*. It is argued that language feeds people's cultural values and world perspectives, thus it is otherwise defined as *"the foundation of culture, as the source of human cultural potential, as the mode of transmission and of change of cultural systems"* (Camilleri & Fak, 2009: 48). That is words play a crucial role in fabricating a social group reality. Language certainly makes culture possible but it does not tell the whole story of its development.

5. Intercultural competence/communicative competence in FLT

The last fifty years have introduced vital turning points in what relates to FL teaching methodology that end in shifting interest from communicative to intercultural competence. The term competence, utmost in any FL setting, owes its genesis to the work

of Chomsky (1965:04) who claimed of it as “*the speaker-hearer’s knowledge of his language*”. His work received later severe criticism because of discounting contextual appropriateness. Building upon the previous thoughts, Hymes (1972:287) conjured up the term communicative to mean: “*rules of use without which rules of grammar would be useless*”. Rules of use are those that mirror the interdependence of language with its real context of use. Communicative competence is seen then as the ability of producing appropriate stretches of speech in accordance with the FL native context (Vyas & Patel, 2009).

Following this line of thought, FL teaching should seek to help students create meaning rather than solely focus on the linguistic element. To this point, the task of the students is to depart from the grammar of the sentence to the appropriateness of the utterance (Trosborg, 1995). More elaborate interpretations had been introduced by Canal and Swain (1980) with the incorporation of sociolinguistic considerations that later paved the way for cultural issues. The deficiency of the communicative competence paradigm is portrayed in its heavy reliance on the native speaker modeling which indeed obliterates considerations related to the exchange between both sociocultural constituents and exclusively makes hint to situational aspects.

5.1. Considerations on intercultural competence

Any communication system entails an information interchange where the social identity of the participants is being called for. Adherers of the communicative approach were by and large aware of this fact; they focus on the need of preaching about the appropriateness of the utterance. Later discussions emphasized rather on the national identity of the participants and its shortcomings on the shaping of cultural stereotypes since two alien social systems are getting in touch. Besides, reasons like internationalization and technological advances stipulate interculturally competent partners able to jump from and into different cultures.

Though still present in teaching settings, the quest for a native like competence lost partly its credibility, a fact that is further consolidated by the accelerating contact between people issuing from various cultures (Aguilar: 2007, Kramsch:1998). The outcome of this new ideology gives birth to picturing students as mediators between cultures rather than academic puppets meant to digest mechanically others’ worlds. Intercultural competence is not meant to detriment the previous teaching ideology, rather it bridges between sociolinguistic aspects and cross cultural aspects. As a teaching philosophy, it alleges a neutral understanding amid complex sociocultural identities.

Following this stance, FL teachers are set to train students on moderating their views towards the native speakers’ cultural habits, accepting the difference and avoiding cultural judgments. With the abolition of national borders and the process of internationalization, researchers turn to intercultural communication to disclose the features of the new period (Penbek et al., 2009). Moreover, this novel orientation converges with the academia’s calls for the development of active learning, critical reasoning and alternatives weighing. Intercultural learning is beneficial because it “*develops in learners the knowledge of recognizing, valuing, and responding to linguistic and cultural variability through the process of inferring, comparing, interpreting, discussing, and negotiating meaning*”

(Crichton et al., 2004:62). As it leans on students' mental efforts, intercultural competence appeals to the active usage of thinking processes allowing for a triangulation of abilities and skills.

Fantini (2009) thinks of intercultural competence as a composite of skills necessary when one enters into lines of interactions with others who have a different culture. The building rocks of intercultural competence should be exploited in any FL teaching setting since cultures are complicated composites. On one hand, cultures unify and integrate demonstrating internal consistency; on the other hand, they connect and combine through recognizing the difference (Rathje, 2007). Accordingly, dealing with intercultural issues entails bridging the gap between participants stemming from heterogeneous social grounds.

In an attempt to acquaint the educational staff with a model to follow, Byram et al. (2001) and Sercu (2005) suggest some helpful steps to give concrete shape to the intercultural concept, they are phrased as follows:

- Students are invited to shed light on; as well as; to analyze certain cultural phenomena relative both to their native culture and to the FL culture.
- Students are pleaded to acquire skills for attaching meaning to unknown social habits present in the FL setting.
- On equal footing, students are invited to rely on themselves to gather information in relation to the FL community and analyze it in a step of bringing into play the aims of active learning.
- Finally, they should make use of their literary imagination to critically consider the content of the literary text said to influence both their affective and the cognitive side.

However, the most up to date sketch of intercultural competence is put forward by Byram. By abilities, Byram (1997) means a set of "savoirs" necessary so that the process of mediation would be feasible. These are formulated as follows:

- Savoir "knowing": Knowledge of the self and the other, and how the exchanges ensue.
- Savoir comprendre "knowledge of how to understand": Abilities needed to attach meaning to and relate pieces of information.
- Savoir apprendre/ faire "knowledge of how to learn/to do": Set of abilities needed to obtain new knowledge.
- Savoir être "knowing how to be": Skills needed to develop ways of viewing the self in relation to the other.
- Savoir s'engager "knowing how to be devoted": Knowing how to achieve a sense of critical awareness while being exposed to education.

Phrased differently, the model offers a set of predictions about how cultural knowledge orients the interaction.

6. A Sketch on the Concept of Thirdness in academia

There is a disparity between technical terms related to culture and the intercultural. For Higgins (2011) the intercultural and the bicultural are poles apart. While the bicultural self-pictures a flexible shift between different cultures in line with a given context, the intercultural self comes to play as a mediator between cultures. Hence, teachers are urged to enable students to assume that position where they can decenter from their native sociocultural norms and rules of behaviour but not to fully embrace the FL ones. Students are urged to locate themselves between varying cultural spheres.

The novel paradigm is shared also by Kramsch (1998) who claims for a third place culture that neither belongs to the native speaker nor to the student and that culminates in a departure from one's sociocultural contour to a third neutral position most importantly not the FL one. The advent of third place culture into contemporary academic debates was fueled by previous research. For instance, the French semiologist Barthes introduced the idea of a third meaning he labeled the significance (Allen, 2003). That is there is always a third interpretation which is hidden and that is triggered by the context. Meaning is indeed relative to the social group's shared signs, to prior semiotic experiences amassed through time, and to the intents they bring to the minds of the participants. In actual fact, the pioneering thoughts of Kramsch (1998) build on the possibility of teaching culture not as a scheme of facts but rather as an integrated system of signs and meanings.

Other endeavours come from literary specialists in the example of Bakhtin (cited in Todorov, 1984) who introduces the idea of referring to the existence of a double voiced message within an utterance be it coming out from the self or from the other. Dialogism as a technical term was introduced by Holquist (1990) and is built upon and related to multiple layers. First, it is generated through linking the self to the group; being a member of group entails piecing one's identity in relation to the larger group. Second, it is generated through the process of responding; as far as humans exist in collectivity they will be unintentionally contained within the formation of cultural and personal selves. Individuals are the product of the roles they play in reaction to the ones performed by others be these others belong to the same group or to other groups. Third, dialogism transcends the limits of time in that it brings into play the other indices of the self through time to predict about the future.

Altogether, Bakhtin wants of his paradigm as a third possibility of viewing from the outside. The third place culture that has been adapted in the domain of FL teaching aims mainly at freeing the learner's mind from cultural stereotypes and prejudices. It aims at assembling in one package the outcome of each approach and adding the notion of mutual understanding presumably to occur in a neutral posture. Pandian et al. (2014) report about kramsch's interpretations of the concept. Phrasing their thoughts, it displays the following features:

- Students are urged to position themselves objectively between their native culture (C1) and the FL culture (C2).
- Students are assisted to fetch for discrepancies between both cultures then to reflect neutrally upon them.
- Students are encouraged to interpret their own personal perspectives avoiding any type of stereotyped judgment.

On a concrete ground, the realization of this new set of objectives needs a fertile and motivating ground; it needs also a feasible basis where students get indirect experience with realities of the native speakers' life. Sessions of oral expression and literature can be perfect for the planting the concept of thirdness. Besides, the bulk of college teachers oblige students to read about the literary products of native speakers each with a personal goal in the mind. What is of import is that the student cannot avoid that touch with the FL culture.

7. Literary reading within an intercultural axiom

FL teaching ideology has been looked upon as a means of uprooting a moderate appreciation towards the anthropological and humanistic attributes of the native speaker's milieu. As a language skill, reading has always enjoyed a respectable posture within the realm of FL teaching. Currently, there is a multiplicity of text genre that is readily available to be used by students. However, FL students tend to rely majorly on literary readings because of the availability of books in this genre. There are exceptions to this conclusion when one thinks of the new technological options but the focus of this paper is shed on the literary aspect.

Skills of reading are paramount because they give for the flexible manipulation of meaning construction and interpretation. Grabe (2009: 221) defines them as *"informational processing techniques that are automatic, whether at the level of recognizing grapheme-phoneme correspondence or summarizing a story"*. Implicitly, this includes aspects of cognitive ability when mentioning the process of recognizing and summarizing. Simply, the reading skill cannot escape the revolutionary initiatives giving for the application of higher thinking skills the same as analysis and evaluation. The process of attaching convenient interpretations for the reading extract is based on a transmuting of truths made plain by the text (Berrio, 1992). New horizons can be explored via literary readings, and so students will put in practical use the knowledge, attitudes and skill that are summed up in reading, interpreting and finally sorting new schemes of comparing. Zyngier (1994) claims that the language of the literary text is not that complicated for it possesses aspects of everyday language.

The literary text represents indeed a minor picture of the large native community; it is loaded with bits of culture ranging from norms of conduct to artistic products. Spatial and temporal concepts as well as ways in which native speakers' conduct their daily affairs are evidently referred to. For this reason, Gabrovec (2007:19) urges the FL teaching staff *"to benefit from this biggest possible "bugging" system that enables one to peek into other cultures"*. Discussing about the content of a literary text paves the way for a clarification of the cultural information included within the reading passage (Homer, 1977).

It is often claimed that literary works are drafted in order to tackle the social issues of a given community, so they are helpful in jumping into others' worlds. For Riwes Cruz (2010) the language of the literary text reflects a nowhere English given the premise that it stands for the type of language used by native speakers and so it facilitates lines of mutual understanding. On equal footing, modern literary works help curtailing the gap between hitherto diverse societies. It is beneficial for students to broaden their range of

views towards the culture of people whose language is the subject of their study course (Mobley & Weldon, 2006).

Linking the literary to the intercultural is made obvious following these schemes. Above and beyond, with their rich content they invite students to go beyond the level of the word and go downwards with the text. Within an intercultural model, students are on the move to work on the text and develop interpretive and analytical skills of thinking necessary in the process of comparing between both cultures that afterwards leads to the creation of new perceptiveness. For Schwab (cited in Bruns, 2011), dealing with FL literature is an activity full of investigations of otherness as well as mediations between alien cultural ideologies. Literary texts are perfect mirrors of the real world that lies behind; they act as to diminish the unease often accompanied with a foreign culture and lean on the transitional space to experience with the other.

8. Intercultural perspectives on literary competence

The word competence is indeed a key term in almost all domains ranging from educational to professional. It demands a set of predispositions gathered under the headings of knowledge, abilities and skills. In FL education the term appeared first with the work of Chomsky and generalized to the forthcoming teaching philosophies.

Lazar (1993) argues that literary competence requires students to possess the ability of understanding and appreciating literary contents. As a matter of fact, it is different from linguistic competence because the capacity of being au fait with literary readings is not endowed to all people. Widdowson (1999:98) alleges that: *“literary competence posits the existence of implicit knowledge or internalized knowledge [...] which enables readers to discriminate, read and make sense of the literary text”*. Following this scheme, readers who can find paths of meaning included within the text are said to be competent readers. In this context, the set of competencies required from readers to get along with what is read are to be able to understand the plot, to be able to contrast the content with reality, and to be able to make their own summaries (Stubbs, 1983).

On their way of realizing these aspects, students are meant to identify points of similarity and difference existing between their society and the FL ones. Besides, literary texts in themselves are complex spheres that activate students' contributions to view the different angles of possible analyses. One feasible way to encourage students to respond to what they read is the technique of written journal response; it is perfect in mirroring students' perceptions (Bainbridge & Pantaleo, 1999).

Specifically, at the level of this juncture students are set to swing between the different “savoirs” of intercultural competence. For instance, they can compare between both cultures objectively, put forward the discrepancies between both of them, and refer to their personal experiences in attaching meaning to the text. It is at this level that traits of thirdness come into play, then the result is a new posture vis-à-vis the native speakers and their world. Third place culture with its array of sub competencies converges with the ideas of Rosenblatt (2005) of multiple interpretations. For her, students hold a collection of data derived from their ultimate milieu but also they possess a set of background schemata that need to be activated in a process of analysis against the FL ones.

It is not appropriate; though; to neglect the positive effect of due cultural knowledge in relation to literary competence and perceptiveness towards the other. Eskey (1988) asserts that students who had been subject to know about the FL culture will not face much difficulty, interpreting and linking the text to their context, as those who ignore about it. In the end, the final aim of including literary reading is to relativize views towards the FL culture in relation to the students' one. As well, students are no more considered as blank slates obliged to jump into the world of the author rather if well acquainted with cultural snippets they can achieve that third sphere from which to view deferentially the other.

9. Mitigating cultural tension of FL texts

From a learner-centred perspective, text analysis grows as an inescapable activity. Teachers are asked in this vein to let students' minds' loose in the way of experimenting with the text. The process of freeing students' minds to attach meanings to the reading passage is not often an unguided one. Hence, it is always effectuated under the supervision of accompanying educational assumptions.

Hagood et al. (2010:50) proposes a definition of the term interpretation and argues that "*the act of searching for understanding, a reconciling of what seems obvious and transparent to a reader at a given point in time and what the reader perceives to be still unknown*". In this context, there is a wide range of text type that is readily available for classroom use and that help realizing this objective. Literary reading, loaded with cultural pieces of information up till now alien to students, can fuel their reflections or sense of critical contemplation of certain events.

Lazar (1993) explains that it is a helpful way to guide students make comments about their feelings and emotions vis-à-vis what is being read. This is relevant on an excellent scale to students who possess an advanced command of English for they can easily draft responses to issues related to their personal life. Specifically, when they have already some FL cultural information they will simply move to a neutral stance from which to view the other. The response technique is one way of bridging the gap between both cultures, for Fish (1980) students' responses are not about meaning indeed they are the meaning. The following activity types are extracted from a comprehensive list developed by Barret et al. (2014). Some activities have been adopted by the researcher on condition that they will be preceded by an incarnation of the concept of thirdness in students' minds.

9.1. Activities for the creation of multi-perceptiveness

This type of tasks is relevant in installing interpretative and observational abilities as well as the faculty of decentering from one's sociocultural contour. In this regard, students are set to read then to analyse and discuss aspects of the text that do not belong to their native culture. However, not the extent of launching prejudices about native speakers since the aim is to train them on the use on non-judgmental comparisons. On equal footing, locating students to reiterate the content of the text from their own point of view yields the floor for the development of multiple perspectives. It is a double facet

activity in which students learn how to respond and how to retell events embracing other perspectives.

9.2. Virtual reality and role Play

This type of interactional activities saw light for the first time during the high days of the situational approach. Besides their positive effect on guaranteeing purposeful lines of communication, they provide a solid basis of integrating all language elements (Kerr, 1977). Under the premise of equipping students with snippets of the FL culture, simulation activities are there to help them plunge into the FL social world. Hence, they offer a practical experience as to how native speakers behave, believe and conduct their day to day activities. Reconstructing a reading passage in a literature class can lead to uncovering the cultural difference, to raising awareness about that difference, to adapt the features of a new identity and the ending point is developing positive perceptions towards the other.

9.3. Inventive Writing Activities

Encouraging students to write summaries about what they read is helpful in building their competence. The reading act in itself is a textbook way to tell about the FL culture. Consequently, the complimentary activity is to guide students through re-approaching the reading passage from a neutral third angle that mitigates traits of both cultural systems. Above all, they can train students to revise their stereotypes of native speakers.

9.4. Ethnographic Activities

Tasks that turn around the discovery of the anthropological features of foreign societies can trigger students' sense of critical contemplation. A structured exercise that teachers can assign in relation to the reading text is the analytical probing of certain speech acts in the example of greeting, promising, ordering, etc. relatively to the FL society. The outcome of this analysis can be evaluated and measured with students' active involvement so that it leads to the development of positive perceptions of native speakers. Discussions about the ethnographic features of the FL community can at best shape their responses towards the sociocultural phenomenon being under scrutiny.

10. Conclusion

Discussions about the effect of the intercultural paradigm on educational outcomes have recently fueled interminable discussions in the field of FL. The result of these quests has first paved the floor for the inclusion of aspects of message appropriateness. Soon after, academic inquiries advance the concept of the intercultural or third place culture to mean the mediating sphere between foreign and native culture. If the aspirations of foreign language teaching ideology is to prepare students to succeed on a global scope, then the inclusion a third place notion is inescapable.

Educationists put forward a set of suggestive instructions for the realization of this aim amid which is the overt teaching of foreign language culture. Thirdness refers to the appropriate use of the foreign language to build lines of mutual understanding with native speakers; it transcends the old fashioned scheme of communicative competence to that of intercultural competence. Hence, it locates students in a position of examiners where they

pay due focus to their social norms, values and rituals in relation to the native speakers' ones. By stepping into others' shoes, tensions between both cultures will slacken allowing for smooth intercultural exchanges.

The reflections communicated in this paper bring about the fieldwork results in relation to the concept of culture, culture and its nexus with language, the notion of interculturality or what is referred to as thirdness in general, and their impact on students' reflections about the other in literature sessions. Then, it goes over some of the bearings of these terms on educational settings of foreign language teaching. It culminates with a set of classroom activities to turn to for the sake of developing positive perceptiveness towards the native speakers and their culture. The premise for the realization of this aim is that the analysis of the reading text should be preceded by a fostering of intercultural competence in the students' minds.

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