

ACHIEVING CULTURAL AWARENESS IN ENGLISH AS A FOREIGN LANGUAGE (EFL) LESSONS USING AFRICAN LITERARY TEXTS

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Abstract: Literature has been used to teach the English language for a considerably long period of time. The purpose of this study is to investigate the effectiveness of specifically using African literary texts to achieve cultural awareness via cross-cultural reading in the field of teaching English as a Foreign Language (EFL). The study extends to establish why African literary texts have more to offer compared to other literary texts from elsewhere in terms of the capacity to teach English as a language.

The effectiveness and broad benefits of including literature for the purpose of teaching English as a Foreign Language or indeed as a Second Language is highlighted in this study.

This study examined fifteen chapters of the novel *Things Fall Apart* to assess how culture is portrayed and how this portrayal of culture helps readers in cross-cultural reading to be more aware of the African culture including their own culture from recognizing and appreciating the differences in the elements that constitute their own cultures.

Keywords: English as a Foreign Language (EFL), Culture, Cross-cultural reading, African literary texts, Second language learning.

I. INTRODUCTION

Literary texts have been used to teach English as a foreign language for many years now. This has become part of the traditional methods. The choice of a literary text can be the holding point on how effective literature can be in the learning and teaching process. This research aims to establish the significance of using African literary texts in English as a Foreign Languages class (EFL). The research has an interest in how literature in particular can be fully utilized in language classes. There are a lot of other mediums of language teaching. Some of the mediums include poetry, folktales, performed theatre, songs, and many more. Literary texts carry all elements needed in the acquisition of language. Literary texts can aid learners to cover all the aspects of language.

The necessary skills that certify a competent language user are often found in literary texts thus; writing, reading, speaking and listening. As such extensive language practice is a guarantee. It is in every language instructor's interest to make sure they produce complete and competent language users. The researcher of this study believes literature; in this case, literary texts more than any other medium of teaching language are more enjoyable for learners. Hismanoglu (2005), stated that once the student reads a literary text, he begins to inhabit the text. He is drawn into the text. Literary texts offer more coverage of the language aspects. As stated above, the focus will lean on the effectiveness of African literary texts in imparting cultural awareness and not just teaching language.

The effectiveness on what literary texts could achieve is what will be examined throughout this study. It is significant to establish if, in any way, there is indeed a connection between teaching English using African literary texts and the improvement of learners' understanding of their own society. This also stretches to the learners being knowledgeable on how other communities with different structures are set up and consequently operate. The main factor of the learning process is the promotion of reflective thinking in the learner. A reflective process, or reflective thinking, is considered a critical component of transformative learning for learners. According to Kershavazi (2012), this could be cultural or the simple use of language. It has been hypothesized that using African Literary texts enhances the ability to link culture and language to create cultural awareness therefore succeeding in language acquisition. The hypothesis in question will be crucial in identifying how language instructors can make their lessons livelier. Student-teacher interaction is important in language learning and acquisition. This can only happen if the medium of language teaching provides such a platform. In order to establish the certainty of the hypothesis, the researcher analysed a novel.

II. LITERATURE REVIEW AND HYPOTHESIS

It has been hypothesized that African literary texts enhance learners' and readers' ability to understand the importance of culture within their own environment as well as other societies to which they do not belong to. English has been regarded as an international language for many years. According to Broughton, G., et al (2002), out of the 4,000 to 5,000 languages that exist in the world today, English is by far the most used language in the world. As such it has gotten to the point where almost any part of the world to be educated means to know English (Mydans, 2007). English has been used for a lot of purposes including mass communication; the same is true for education. Ahmad (2016) states that English is asserted to be a passport to better education. He (2016), goes on to say English has a status of a second language in almost all countries where it is not the first language. For a further understanding of the two concepts (EFL/ESL), there are a lot of factors that enhance the qualities of a language in teaching English as a Second Language or a Foreign Language. The teachers are the starting point of the whole journey. According to Toussi et al., (2011), there was a huge change that swept through the education systems from the 1980s to the 21st century. This reform focused on aspects to do with teaching but from the teacher's expectations in lesson roles and teacher effectiveness.

Like everyone else, teachers are no exception for holding personal beliefs, and personal ideologies including personal experiences. When all of these are utilized and intertwined effective teaching takes place. The mentioned beliefs are unconscious but serve as a manual that detects the activities the teacher gives to the language students. The teacher's beliefs may from time to time dictate the type of materials they may give to their learners as a source of language input. In a prior research paper by Islam (2017) when those beliefs are effectively and creatively combined the teacher is more aware of the approach that is needed in making sure the teaching is effective.

The result of the change that has occurred in the English as a Foreign Language (EFL) world is due to a number of reasons. The particular change was that cognitive and social characteristics were incorporated into what would be successful/effective teaching, EFL lessons included. In EFL classes, effective teaching which leans more on what an effective teacher is can be defined in several ways. Borg (2006) declared that language teachers are different from teachers who teach different subjects. He (2006, pp. 11-13) continued to argue that when compared to other subjects, language teachers need to;

Focus on the nature of the subject matter itself; they do not have any other option. They should;

- 1) Create the interaction patterns that provide a platform for clear instruction transmission.
- 2) The teachers are supposed to continuously increase their knowledge of the language. Language does not stay constant as such; they must stay abreast with the current language.
- 3) There is always a need to have supporting materials outside to help learn the subject.

Change has impacted the field of teaching English as a Foreign Language. According to Karimi (2015), it is no longer the tradition that relies upon the language instructor to do everything during the language acquisition process. Modern-day English as Foreign Language readers are perceived to be learners that have to come up with a coherent semantic construction of a topic. That is a clear example of how there has been a complete overhaul of language learning. As a reflection on how so much has changed in EFL/ESL classes, new approaches were slowly replacing the old strategy/strategies. Longo (2008) stated that it is important to recognize that the world continuously evolves with the trends. These trends are quite influenced by worldwide developments with issues such as globalization, cross-cultural exchanges as well as attributes of international

communication. This reflects the need of staying abreast with what is a reflection of life as it is now in the 21st century. Like everything else, EFL/ESL teaching and learning have gone through the process of modernization. As pointed out, learning a foreign language adopted a universal way of approaching it.

Students differ in many different ways; therefore it is inevitable to find ways or teaching styles that accommodate all learners whether individually or as a collective. Reid (1995) defined learning styles as the characteristics that inhabit every person for the lone purpose of absorbing new information but also, processing and eventually understanding that new set of information. As mentioned in the introduction, the present study explores more on the reading of literary texts as such the focus is on the strategies that would best suit a reading class. Reading strategies are an indication of how readers approach a text, and how they attempt to make sense of what they are looking at.

Language Awareness and Cross-cultural Awareness

Around the 1950s that the idea of awareness in language started to arise as Farahian and Rezaee (2015) wrote in their publication. The question of awareness of language came about as the need to understand why language is such a very important point in teaching and learning. There was a greater purpose for having knowledge about language beyond what the gaze meets.

Recently, the definition of competence in language has been shifting from linguistic knowledge alone to a broader meaning, thus according to Hol, Devrim, and Ali Erarslan (2015). This shift means language is no longer only restricted to being able to speak a language but having a deeper interest and understanding of everything that surrounds a language. Language In language teaching and learning, Language Awareness (LA) is a binding component to achieving second language acquisition. The definition as stated by the Association of Language Awareness (ALA) 2012, means the explicit knowledge about language, and conscious perception and sensitivity in language learning, language teaching, and also language use.

Role of Language Awareness

According to the definition by Peker (2019), Language is a spoken or written code used as a medium of interaction among people. It has rules that connect letters, words, or sentences together. However, she states that there is a great distinction between knowing the language rules and structure and making one understood by others on a particular subject matter in a conversation. What is binding in the conversation is what constitutes the common world we habit in.

Kramersch (2002, p.43) points out that “language is another human aspect that is in constant motion and never a static phenomenon as it is a living thing”. Language changes in order to adapt and suit the continuous communicative needs of society. It is important to recognize that there are three domains of language. These three domains border around language learning, language teaching, and language use as explained by Garrett & James (2000). Again, Language Awareness goes beyond a person being fluent in a language. It is very important to discuss extensively on Language Awareness. The role of language awareness primarily is to advance the learner’s in-depth knowledge of the particular language they are interested in acquiring. Language awareness can be taken as a methodology and at the same time as a goal to achieve in the language acquisition process, thus according to Wright (2002).

Developing Cultural Awareness

According to Jin-feng (2007), linguistic knowledge on its own is never enough and it never guarantees a successful conversation, interaction, or even competent communication with native speakers of a particular language. In every language especially a person’s second language mistakes are normal and common. In every language especially a person’s second language mistakes are normal and common. Cultural mistakes, however, seem to be more than linguistic ones according to Jin-feng’s findings. The publication continues to state that cultural awareness in its essence means realizing and taking notice of the differences between one’s own culture and that of others. This is inclusive of the positive as well as the negative perceptions of a specific culture an individual is interested in.

It is very important to remember that the contemporary models of communicative competence have shown that there is much more to learning a language, and they include the vital component of cultural knowledge and awareness (Bachman 1990). Cultural knowledge is significant as the understanding people get in the cultural context of day-to-day conversations, this is inclusive of greetings, farewells, forms of address, showing grief, thanking, making requests, and giving or receiving compliments means more than just being able to produce grammatical sentences and the sounds we consider language. It means knowing what is appropriate to say to whom, and in what situations, and it means understanding the beliefs and values represented by the various forms and usages of the language.

Importance of Culture in Foreign Language Classes

Language is a vehicle that carries the culture. As mentioned earlier in this paper, language and culture can never be discussed separately. It is within a culture that language is developed. As such, it is very crucial that we define what culture is. Schein (1991) states that culture is a pattern of shared basic assumptions that affect all aspects of group life. In this regard, group life is what can be considered a community or society. It is further discussed in the publication by Schein that this group of people can be considered as a collective or set of individuals that share common behavior and attitude. Even though that may not be an adequate definition. It can be elaborated further as a group of people who have shared experiences, those that continue to share experiences. Not only do they share experiences they may also share history.

One thing about a culture that is common is the fact that everything else springs from a narrative. A cultural narrative is a story recounted in the form of a casually linked set of events that explains an event in a group's history and expresses the values, identity, and character of the group, and perhaps it is the narratives through which the highly regarded core values and ideologies are absorbed by the people that belong to a particular tribe, thus according to Jager (2007).

On one fold, even though culture is regarded as a collective idea it can be personal. Matsumoto (1996) notes that it is as much an individual, psychological construct as it is a social construct. To some extent, culture exists in every one of us individually as much as it exists as a global, social construct. Individual differences in culture can be observed among people in the degree to which they adopt and engage in the attitudes, values, beliefs, and behaviours that, by consensus, constitute their culture. If you act by those values or behaviours, then that culture resides in you; if you do not share those values or behaviours, then you do not share that culture". Expanding on the importance of culture, we have to acknowledge that culture is as crucial as the language itself in the teaching process in EFL. In any spoken language or type of communication, there is a cultural interaction that happens unconsciously. It is equally important for both learners and teachers to appreciate that culture will always be unique to its place of origin and as such, that must be respected.

Lazear (1999) states that cultural interaction differentiates communication from the mere exchange of information. To complicate things even more, communication is coded and patterned differently in different cultures. The varied coding and patterning apply to both the verbal and the non-verbal aspects of the interaction. Some but not all of the differences are so obvious since others actually occur beneath the level of awareness.

Literary Texts in EFL Classrooms

English and American literature have always been a part of the school curriculum for more than 100 years even in non-English speaking countries around the world and that still remains the same today. According to Bobkina and Dominguez (2014) for nearly the last three decades there has been a drastic shift toward literary and cultural theory as a medium for teaching and learning English as a Foreign Language, describing it as explosive.

Starting from the 1980's all the way to the 1990s there was a visible integration and development of language and culture into the curriculums. The focus on literature somewhat changed from just being seen as literature rather than as a study of cultures. Every language including foreign languages has various and diverse aspects. Literature has always been considered an ally of language as established by Brumit and Carter (1986). Literature has been an example of "good writing". A couple of elements are to be considered before being labelled good writing and as such literature illustrates well-constructed grammatical structures, literary texts go through a thorough correction process before publication, therefore, reducing the chances of having grammatical errors is highly minimal and labeled as well as an authentic example of a close to perfection when it narrows down to language construction in written format.

Why should literature be used in English Foreign Language classes?

Lengyel (1975) lists the benefits of using literature in EFL classes:

-Literature will increase all language skills because literature will extend linguistic knowledge by giving evidence of extensive and subtle vocabulary usage, and complex and exact syntax. The syntax is not modified in any way. It will often represent in a general way the style that can properly stand as a model for the student.

- Literature is a link to the culture which sustains the expression of any language. Undoubtedly literature reflects thoughts, feelings, and actions that are the products of the writer's culture.

-Literature gives one perspective into the awareness of human insight. In this respect, great literature can be justified as one could assert the value of listening to a major symphony. Literature carries a rhythm that allows the consumer to fully tap into the flow of the desired outcome of the text, whether it is amusement, shock, or sometimes suspense.

-Literature in the target language is the promotion of creative writing in that language. He mentions India and Nigeria, where writing fiction in English is not unusual.

-Imaginative power is one of the greatest strengths of literature; it consists in its imaginative, suggestive power, which is undoubtedly beyond the gaze of the written part of the text. This makes literature an ideal tool for generating topics for class debates and the exchange of ideas, thoughts, and concerns.

African Literature and Culture in EFL

Over the years there has been an urge to teach using literature via sources that do not originate from English writers but rather from writers from all over the globe. This has gradually over the years led to the inclusion of multicultural literature into the curriculums in order to achieve diversity in how language and culture are perceived by language learners. African writers and African literary texts have earned a spot in EFL learning, especially in the aspect of utilizing cross-cultural learning and teaching.

According to Mandarani and Munir (2021), multicultural literature is the type of literature that represents and at the same time expands an ethnic, urban, or diverse multicultural perspective and therefore can process a dualistic approach in conceptualizing identities and strengthening the cultural background. They also add that multicultural literature has the ability to help learners to grow a personal connection between the literature and their day-to-day lives as there is always the presence of settings and perspectives that trigger the imagination of a world that is far beyond their own. They go on to state that indeed there is no doubt about the significant cultural awareness contribution that multicultural literature leaves on the learners and that it is on all fronts of what an individual may have to be familiar with and not only that but respect as well. That is cultural equality, social class, ethnicity, gender, language, religion, race, appearance, pluralism, rights, customs, behavioral patterns, education, and tolerance.

African literature has proved to be an authentic example of how orality and literacy can be successfully merged, that is according to Obiechina (1993). The presence of narrative proverbs has been a huge part of African literature. African literature made an enormous shift from traditional oral literature to written literature during the early 1960s. They function as images, metaphors, and symbols and advance the meanings and formal qualities of the narratives in which they occur. They are extensively used in the works of African novelists, in the novel's female and male African novelists, in those of older and newer writers, in works produced in the different regions of Africa south of the Sahara, and they extend across broad ideological and generic divides.

Narrative proverbs in African novels cut across gender, genres, ideologies, regions, and generations, it is legitimate to assume that their use is an essential feature of the poetics of the African novel, a feature which derives from the interplay of creative principles of oral and literary traditions. Obviously, this has helped to preserve the myths, beliefs, and values as they were. The stories do not change the base on which the African cultural system has been built around. This is also because the writers themselves are mostly products of the oral tradition and literature education.

Obiechina (1993) goes on further to demonstrate what sets African literature apart from other literary texts from elsewhere. He mentions of the presence of proverbs, another popular feature of African storytelling thus, whether written or orally narrated. Narrative proverbs are also central in African literature even the colonial past and history have been vastly discussed and explained using the same. One of the most highlighted problems of African literary texts is the language they are written in. Most of the literary texts that have had a huge impact were never written in the author's native language.

Thiong'o (1985) believed that an African writer was better off expressing his ideas in his language. He felt that the other languages of the colonial masters had been, without the writers realizing, imposed on them. Thiong'o, a Kenyan, started to write in his native language of Gikuyu, in his words wrote "An African writer should write in a language that will allow him to communicate effectively with peasants and workers in Africa? in other words, he should write in an African language". He believed that writing in the African language would mean that the masses had an opportunity to get closer to their realities via written literature. He disputes the idea that language did not have any meaningful impact on the reader or consumer of the literature as other scholars and writers had claimed. He also discussed the rhetoric that the dialogue on African literature and the languages of different Africans had continuously drifted apart since the use of intermediary

languages such as English and French (which he viewed as indirect communication) had become common. He claimed that the only solution was to translate the texts from whatever African language they were written into other African languages. He insisted that his opinion was fuelled by his desire to have Africans as the first and primary consumers of the literature.

Criteria

A criterion adopted from Lazar (1993) *Literature and Language Teaching* was developed in order to generate the research questions for this study.

Table 1: Criteria adopted from Lazar (1993)

| CRITERIA FOR ANALYZING CULTURAL ASPECTS IN THINGS FALL APART | |
|--|--|
| CRITERIA 1 | Objects and products that exist in African society |
| CRITERIA 2 | Idioms and proverbs that exist in African society |
| CRITERIA 3 | Social structures, roles, and relationships in African society |

Research Questions

This study it is hypothesized that reading African literary texts enhances the ability to raise cultural awareness and addresses the following three research questions which need to be considered seriously:

1. To what extent does the novel *Things fall Apart* contain objects or products that exist in African society?
2. To what extent does the novel *Things fall Apart* contain idioms and proverbs that solely belong to African society?
3. To what extent are the social structures, roles, and relationships depicted in the novel *Things fall Apart*?

Scope of the Research

The book analyses randomly chosen fifteen chapters from the novel *Things Fall Apart*. Qualitative content analysis has been applied during the analysis of the chapters where the data has been extracted.

III. METHODOLOGY

In this research, the novel was selected. The main purpose of testing the hypothesis that African literary texts written by African authors, was to establish if that could be the best way to impart and develop students with cultural awareness. There is a need to incorporate the knowledge of culture into the teaching curriculums as this hugely contributes to the learner's individual development as a member that belongs to society. It is obvious that for any individual to show respect to any other culture, he/she must first have a clear understanding of their own culture and the starting point is exposure to other different cultures which have been built around unique experiences and instruments. The results and findings of the research questions 1,2, and 3 were shown in Tables 2, Tables 3, and Tables 4.

Data

Randomly selected fifteen chapters from the novel *Things Fall Apart* by the celebrated African writer Chinua Achebe were selected as data for this research.

IV. ANALYSIS OF THE FINDINGS

Table 2: Objects/products found in African society within the selected chapters

| CHAPTERS | OBJECTS / PRODUCTS | NAME OF OBJECTS / PRODUCTS |
|------------|-------------------------|---------------------------------|
| CHAPTER 1 | Musical instruments | African drums, Ogene, Udu, Ekwe |
| CHAPTER 2 | African housing | Obi |
| CHAPTER 3 | African food | Yams, Kola, Alligator pepper |
| | African housing | Obi |
| | African beverage | Palm wine |
| CHAPTER 5 | African food | Yams, Foo Foo |
| | African dining utensils | Wooden bowls |
| CHAPTER 6 | Sacred place | Ilo |
| CHAPTER 10 | Musical instruments | African flute |
| | Sacred place | Ilo |

| | | |
|-------------------|------------------------------|---------------------|
| CHAPTER 11 | Curvilinear designs | Uli |
| CHAPTER 15 | African housing | Obi |
| | African food | Yams, Bitter leaf |
| | African beverage | Palm wine |
| CHAPTER 17 | African housing | Obi |
| CHAPTER 18 | African sacred animals | Sacred royal python |
| CHAPTER 20 | X | X |
| CHAPTER 22 | African traditional medicine | Ogwu |
| CHAPTER 24 | African housing | Obi |
| CHAPTER 25 | African housing | Obi |

As it is seen the table 1, fourteen (14) of the fifteen (15) randomly selected chapters contained objects or products that belong to African society. Only chapter twenty (20) does not have the objects/products that are uniquely found in African society.

Table 3: Idioms and Proverbs found in Things Fall Apart

| CHAPTERS | AFRICAN PROVERBS | IDIOMS |
|-------------------|--|---|
| CHAPTER 1 | If a child washes his hands he could eat with kings He who brings kola brings life | |
| CHAPTER 2 | When the moon is shining the cripple becomes hungry for a walk | Chickens went to roost |
| CHAPTER 3 | When a man is at peace with his gods and ancestors his harvest will be good Eneke the bird says that since men have learned to shoot without missing, he has learned to fly without perching A toad does not run in the daytime for anything | |
| CHAPTER 5 | | Every man whose arm is strong is expected to invite large numbers of guests from far and wide |
| CHAPTER 6 | | Quick as flash |
| CHAPTER 10 | | Quick as the lightning of Amadior |
| CHAPTER 11 | A baby on its mother's back does not know the way is long | |
| CHAPTER 15 | Never make an appointment with a man who has just married a new wife | |
| CHAPTER 17 | | To whisper together Roaring fire |
| CHAPTER 18 | It is not our custom to debar anyone from the stream or the quarry | |
| CHAPTER 20 | | He has put a knife on the things that unite us Have not found a mouth with which to tell of their suffering |
| CHAPTER 22 | As a man danced so the drums were beaten for him It is good that a man should worship the gods and spirits of his fathers | An outsider who weeps more than the bereaved The band of <i>Egwugwu</i> moved like a furious whirlwind Stood his ground |
| CHAPTER 24 | Whenever you see a toad jumping in broad daylight, then know something is after its life. | |
| CHAPTER 25 | | |
| TOTAL | 12 | 11 |

Table 3 above, of the fifteen (15) chapters, eight (8) Chapters contain proverbs. Seven (7) chapters out of the fifteen (15) chapters contain idioms. Proverbs are more than the idioms found in the novel.

Figure 1. Showing the frequency of idioms and African proverbs

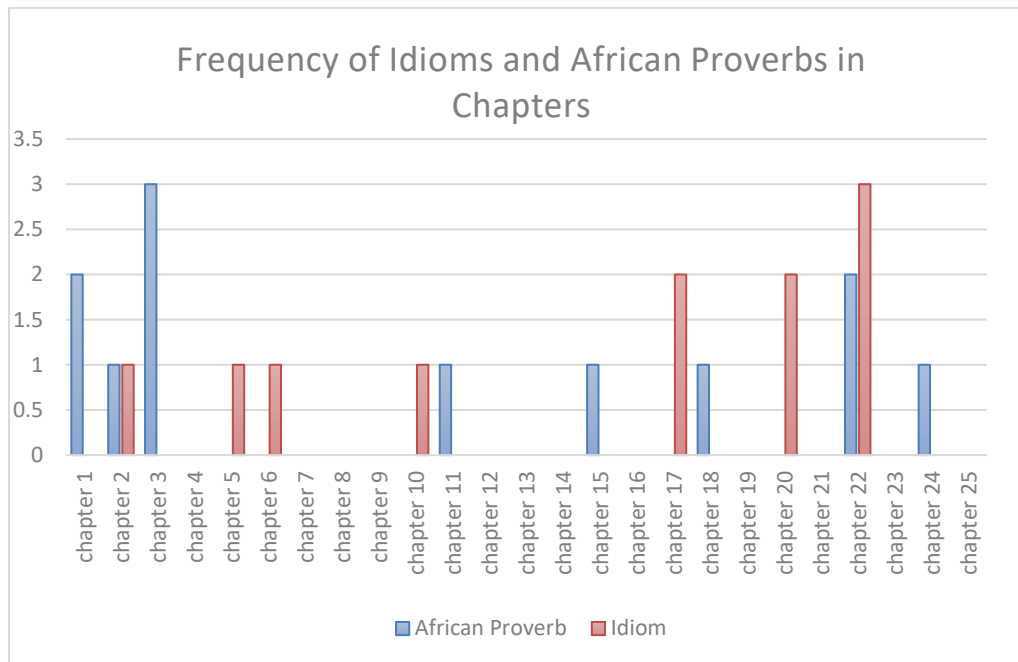


Figure 1 above displays the frequency of African proverbs and idioms as variables in the randomly selected fifteen (15) chapters.

Table 4. The extent of the social structures, roles, and relationships are depicted in the novel *Things fall Apart?*

| CHAPTERS | GENDER/SOCIAL STATUS | SOCIAL RELATIONSHIPS AND ROLES ASSIGNED BY GENDER AND SOCIAL STATUS |
|-------------------|--|--|
| CHAPTER 1 | Male children Father Women | Warriors Provider, a hard worker Polygamous wives to the men |
| CHAPTER 2 | Male children Female children Women Fathers | Male children are expected to be strong and Warriors Virgin girls are offered as compensation to young men As wives, they are expected to submit wholly to their husbands Fathers are not expected to be gentle |
| CHAPTER 3 | Male children Women | They expect to inherit a barn or title from their fathers Polygamous marriages with men |
| CHAPTER 5 | Women | Polygamous wives to the men |
| CHAPTER 6 | Women Male children | Children bearers for men Keeping order at functions |
| CHAPTER 10 | Women | Polygamous wives to men |
| CHAPTER 11 | Women | Housekeepers for their homes |
| CHAPTER 15 | | |
| CHAPTER 17 | Elders Fathers | They decide whether to give the white men part of the evil forest They are disciplinarians of their children |
| CHAPTER 18 | Elders | They meet to decide on the fate of the accused python killer, Okoli |
| CHAPTER 20 | Male children Female children | They have to protect their land from invaders They should only get married to the known and wealthy |
| CHAPTER 22 | | |
| CHAPTER 24 | Men | Administrators of justice in the village |
| CHAPTER 25 | | |

As seen in table 4 the roles of each member of society, relationships, and social structures are found in twelve (12) of the fifteen (15) chapters of the novel.

The findings from the fifteen randomly selected chapters reveal that there is a presence of elements that make up African society and how unique these African elements make African literary texts special. The repetition and continuous presence of African cultural elements shows and proves that the novel is not only for the English language but also makes the reader part of African society.

V. CONCLUSION AND DISCUSSION

This study mainly focuses on the effectiveness of using African literary texts could enhance cultural awareness amongst learners of English as their second language be it in classrooms, casual reading, or true reading. For a considerable long amount of time I, as a language and literature student graduate and language teacher have realized that African texts are neglected when it comes to teaching English as a Foreign Language. There is a stigma that we teachers of English have placed on African literary texts which has stagnated the need to tap into the many interesting aspects of African society. Throughout the selected fifteen chapters analyzed what is unique about the way the story is told by Achebe (1958) and how that reflects African culture, traditions, and customs. The uniqueness of the book reflects the potential African literature has to offer. As mentioned, the book combines the use of language (English) and culture. As a language teacher, it is not difficult to agree with Lazar's (1993) assertion in her book that teaching language using literature has the advantage of creating a completely competent user who is fluent as well as knowledgeable on the subjects that make up language such as culture, environment, food, and how members of society behave. These features actually arouse certain excitement, emotions, and questions around the message being conveyed to the reader which is the actual target for using literature in English as Foreign Language (EFL) learning.

Achebe is a great example of an author who masters the ability to portray how culture and identity ought to be protected at all costs. He uses the characters to show the world how strong the Igbo culture is, he uses the characters to show that African wisdom can be used to shape non-African societies. Most of the book is written from an oral tradition. Achebe sticks to the belief that his African roots and identity of folklore as the best way to present his Igbo culture. That is a major way to show how the book rejects the imperialistic imposition of values of the western modern way of writing literature. Throughout the book, Achebe indirectly does not hide his support for the resistance of anything foreign trying to overrule or portray Africa as lesser. Achebe (1958) uses African proverbs in situations as a way of emphasizing the beauty, uniqueness, and strength of the message being conveyed whenever we come across African proverbs. Not all of the African proverbs are provided in such a serious manner.

The comic factor to some of the African proverbs enables a discussion to be sparked if read as a group. Myself as a language teacher prefer to have a class that's absorbing the content in the material and react to it. *Things Fall Apart* is a material that is presented in such a way that reaction to the events is almost expected. As it was mentioned despite some of the themes being relatable to adults, the language Achebe uses is simple. Readers and students' levels of comprehension differs. Achebe being non-English himself realizes the importance of keeping the language as simple as it can be to increase accessibility to wider readership. The primary target audience is the African reader himself who bears another tongue. English even though an official language in some countries still remains a Second language and as a result the simpler the language used the better access it creates for the reader. This does not limit the books readership to only Africa but the whole world where English is acquired as a foreign language.

Many other African writers such as Paul Tiyambe Zeleza, Ngugi wa Thiong'o, Jack Mapanje, Wole Soyinka, Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie and many others have produced great works highlighting social issues that affect women and children, political background from the past to modern Africa, African education, African religion(s), African economics and many more aspects that build up a certain way of living for a specific group. In all those aspects and how people live it sums up to one thing; culture. Which as discussed in the earlier chapters shapes how society progresses. Due to the colonial past of Africa, has existed in two folds the pre-colonial and post-colonial eras. This means the culture of many African societies has been shaped according to that reality. African texts offer the opportunity to teach and help learners become aware and understanding of how both sides of the cultural amendments that have taken place. That is what makes African literary texts special. With *Things Fall Apart*, the text provides a complete cultural background, this really helps the reader understand the plot of what is about to unfold. This familiarizes the reader with the surroundings of the text which measures the schemata of the reader as well.

African texts such as *Things Fall Apart* offer more than just a platform for language acquisition. They expand to the awareness of the social, political, and historical background that helps the reader become a part of the society of the book

they are reading. In turn, Achebe in his text, educates future generations on the importance of authenticity. The fact that he maintains the names of the significant symbols and objects in Igbo culture in the Igbo language enforces the reader to understand how deeply meaningful these objects mean to the Igbo society. He however gives a direct translation of almost all the words used anywhere; this allows the reader to familiarize themselves with the language. That is how cultural awareness is achieved. The focus of the book provides contextual background to make the reader understand how much of a normal life people had led in Africa, therefore, declaring how unnecessary it is for the Westerners to change the people. That is the gateway to understanding how social relationships are formed.

African texts offer the rare opportunity to learn the African story and culture as told by Africans themselves than when told by non-African writers as has been the case. That has always left out the finer details that are overlooked by non-African writers but greatly define what constructs African society. Reading African texts helps to develop readers who are aware of their own cultures as they can identify certain elements they never realized existed. This allows them to value and understand the cultures of many other different places. As language teachers our duty goes beyond developing a competent language user, the aim should be at developing individuals that appreciate the various factors that influence language.

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