

**T.C.
ISTANBUL AYDIN UNIVERSITY
INSTITUTE OF GRADUATE STUDIES**



**ACHIEVING CULTURAL AWARENESS IN ENGLISH AS A FOREIGN
LANGUAGE (EFL) CLASSES USING AFRICAN NOVELS.**

MASTER'S THESIS

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**Department of English Language and Literature
English Language and Literature**

MARCH, 2023

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APPROVAL PAGE

DECLARATION

I hereby declare that the study has been conducted in compliance with the ethical procedures set by the university. A consent form was given to the respondents before collecting data. Moreover, the data was collected and protected in terms of confidentiality and anonymity. This work is original, and it does not contain infringement of intellectual property of or contains plagiarism. All the quotes and ideas taken from other authors are duly cited and referenced in compliance with the citation style set forth by the university.

Palmer KHANYANGA

FOREWORD

I want to dedicate this thesis to my hero, my father, who has been a wonderful source of support for me throughout my entire academic career, from the start to the finish. I'd also like to thank my mother, who constantly let me know I was on her mind and in her prayers during the whole process. I appreciate all the support my siblings Hunnings, Gregory, Kings, and Matilda offered me throughout the process. I want to express my gratitude to all of my friends who were eager to see my work and supported me in various ways.

Last but not least, I owe a lifetime debt of gratitude to my supervisor, Dr. Ilkin BASAR, for her assistance during the entire process. You were kind to me.

January 2023

Palmer KHANYANGA

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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 fourteen 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.

AFRIKA EDEBİ METİNLERİ KULLANARAK YABANCI DİL DERSLERİNDE (İNGİLİZCE) KÜLTÜREL FARKINDALIĞI ARTIRMA

ÖZET

Edebiyat, oldukça uzun bir süredir İngilizce öğretmek için kullanılmaktadır. Bu çalışmanın amacı, Yabancı Dil Olarak İngilizce öğretimi alanında kültürler arası okuma yoluyla kültürel farkındalığa ulaşmak için Afrika edebi metinlerini özel olarak kullanmanın etkinliğini araştırmaktır. Çalışma, İngilizce'yi bir dil olarak öğretme kapasitesi açısından Afrika edebi metinlerinin başka yerlerden gelen diğer edebi metinlere kıyasla neden daha fazlasını sunacağını ortaya koymaya kadar uzanıyor.

İngilizce'yi Yabancı Dil olarak veya aslında İkinci Dil olarak öğretmek amacıyla edebiyatı dahil etmenin etkinliği ve geniş yararları bu çalışmada vurgulanmıştır.

Bu çalışma, kültürün nasıl tasvir edildiğini ve bu kültür tasvirinin okuyucuların kendi kültürlerini oluşturan unsurlardaki farklılıkları tanımaktan ve takdir etmekten kendi kültürleri de dahil olmak üzere Afrika kültürünün daha fazla farkına varmalarına nasıl yardımcı olduğunu değerlendirmek için *Things Fall Apart* adlı romanın on dört bölümünü inceledi.

Anahtar Kelimeler: Yabancı Dil Olarak İngilizce (EFL), kültür, Kültürler arası okuma, Afrika edebi metinleri, İkinci dil öğrenimi.

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I. INTRODUCTION

A. 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 will analyze a novel.

B. Background of the Study

Language and culture are non-separable elements. The study focuses on how teaching language can be an effective way to teach and impart culture to an individual consuming literature. The study adopts an African literary text *Things Fall Apart* for the analysis on African rural life which depicts the authentic elements of the African culture. Social relationships are extensively described in detail in the course of reading the novel. Achebe (1958) brings the concept of social relationships and gender roles from the African perspective. Every gender's role is made clear. As mentioned, this is carefully done to initiate even those unfamiliar with the African culture into understanding how the events unfold as the novel goes on. The events tell the African story from the perspective of an African.

Language teaching is widely broad and complex since the possibility of having learners with different cultural backgrounds is always a reality. Students do not always share a common background and as such, it is almost impossible to have a language class with cultural uniformity. Reading literature cross-culturally cannot be ignored. According to Lazar (1993), this is in actuality the best way to approach reading literature. Lazar (1993) tasks from which criteria for the development of research questions have been prepared.

C. Aim of the study

The purpose of this study is to highlight the untapped importance of studying and use of African literary texts in English as a Foreign Language (EFL) to achieve cultural awareness. Like any other society there are elements of the culture of that particular society that can never be or if found are rarely found anywhere else. Literature is the greatest custodian of culture. There are many African proverbs, idioms, religious practices, norms, taboos, beliefs, norms, and many other African elements that can be used to teach English cross-culturally. Cultural awareness is very important. This could be one's own culture and also the culture of other places. Culture is what defines a person. Not only does culture define people, but culture also gives people a permanent identity.

Reading literature can be the authentic gateway to cultural awareness. Cultural awareness can be of oneself as well as that of others. Language can be a channel for many other things as it is classified as a cultural artifact. Unlike other sources of language and even of literature, literary texts are a great source for language's broad desired achievements. Readers must have a clear understanding of any literary text presented to them and they must be able to benefit not only by acquiring language but also from other human needs to function in society such as cultural awareness. The researcher's aim is to demonstrate why African literary texts must be widely used to help learners familiarize themselves with cultural awareness.

D. Statement of the problem

Culture and language are two inseparable elements. It is impossible to teach language while ignoring culture. As that is the case, it must be every language instructor's goal to achieve maximum cultural awareness when teaching language. Teaching in EFL classes is not an easy task. Language teaching demands extreme creativity from the instructor's part. A language instructor has to explore all the possible creative ways to teach as every audience (the students) is different. What might work for one audience might not really be as effective on another set of language students.

Acquisition of language in EFL classes is only an end product of the whole process of piecing together all aspects of language. Achieving cultural awareness is

where there is believed to be an existing gap in the field of language teaching. The role of the language trainer is to help students successfully blend into culture and language. Literary texts were meant to portray life's reality and learners can only absorb this reality if they are fully culturally aware. If that has not been achieved it means the language acquisition process has been broken. Language students do not only use language for academic purposes. It stretches and contributes to them as human beings.

To close in on the gap, what can language teachers do? How can they choose the right African literary texts that can be useful in helping learners be more aware culturally? What must language teachers look for in African literary texts? The struggle many language teachers go through is choosing the right African literary texts. In many English as a Foreign Language (EFL) classes, learners' exposure is limited to the inside classroom environment. Most of the time in the classroom environment language awareness goals are most likely achieved but not cultural awareness. As such, the particular text chosen should successfully contain the attributes that would make the reader identify those culture-defining elements. African literary texts if used diligently can be enjoyable and yet culturally enriching to the readers as there are a lot of attributes that have not been used in cross-cultural reading over time.

E. 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*?

F. Limitations of the study

Like any other study and specifically due to the nature of the research, this study which is an analysis of a novel as a literary text, the study is limited to the types of approaches that are fit to successfully conduct this study. This renders the sampling method of the fourteen (14) chapters the best. This is the case since, with systematically established facts, there is a need to avoid bias. Randomly chosen fourteen chapters are analyzed from the book. Even though there are a lot of other books and novels by the same author, this novel is chosen from his wide range of published works. The findings are based on the selected novel.

The researcher has narrowed down the approaches he can use when analyzing the collected data from the novel. The data collected is from the researcher's sole findings as no other party is involved in this process. The researcher's gathered results interpretation of the collected information is therefore restricted to his findings while analyzing the book. The author, Achebe has a wide range of other literary works that can be analyzed according to the cultural elements. Some of the books and novels include *The Arrow of God*, *A Man of the People*, *No Longer at Ease*, and *Anthills of the Savannah*.

G. Summary

The first chapter introduces the main objective of this study and what the researcher would like to test the hypothesis that reading African literary texts improves readers' or learners' knowledge about the African culture which in return allows them to be more cultural aware as they enhance their understanding of how culture and language are well as their own culture. The first chapter also highlights the limiting factors which like any other study this particular study was not exempted from.

II. LITERATURE REVIEW

A. Introduction

This chapter provides background on the inclusion of English as a Foreign Language (EFL) into curriculums around the world. This chapter also categorizes the material used expands on the already existing literature which expands to this present study. The existing literature adds value to this study by taking into account what has already been established across the cross-cultural reading field by various researchers and writers. The chapter extends the importance of Language Awareness (LA) and cultural awareness. The two concepts are crucial in creating the base from which the study will place its focus on in terms of linking language and culture.

B. English as Foreign Language (EFL)

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) expands further by asserting English has a status of a second language in almost all countries where it is not the first language. The main purpose of language, like that of any other language, is communication. He (2016) also argues that a language's adaptability, productivity, utility, universality, and teachability are reasons why it should be learned. Sharing thoughts, feelings, and opinions with others is communication. This can take the form of something written, spoken, or conceptual. We are social creatures who live in groups, and man is no exception. We communicate with others as societal needs compel us to do. In many parts of the world English was incorporated into the school education syllabi as a foreign

language (EFL) and as a Second language (ESL). There is a slight difference between these two terms. The common factor between these two concepts is that both concepts focus on learning but also teaching another language. The particular language of interest is different from one's home language or mother language (Lambert, 1990). The introduction of EFL in many countries around the world was seen as an "innovation". According to Porsch and Wilden (2017), that was indeed how this was viewed in the German education system. Innovation in education means coming up with and introducing new techniques, and contemporary methods of teaching learners with the aim of achieving something outside the normal realm of education. In this case, the expected result is not to teach cognitively but also to impact the necessary but often overlooked humane side of the students.

The learning and teaching process in English as a Foreign Language (EFL) needs materials that will aid the whole process. Materials are a necessity for the language acquisition journey. They provide a platform for generating new ideas from already existing concepts. This can be done by introducing and selecting teaching materials that have not been fully utilized. These not so often utilized materials are often ignored due to a range of reasons. Some materials are the instructor's top choice when it comes to their EFL lessons. Why is some material under-utilized? What are materials? According to McGrath (2013) materials are defined as; anything that can be used to facilitate the teaching and learning of language.

These teaching materials could range from novels and books, poems, and songs that originate from all types of sources, inspirations, and different societies. These materials can be classified into two categories McGrath (2013) namely;

- Non-authentic materials.
- Authentic materials.

Materials that are designed for language learning and teaching are pieced together for one purpose. The goal is to teach language, these can also be considered traditional materials. Examples of the materials designed for language learning and teaching include textbooks, literary texts, worksheets as well as computer software. In the category of authentic materials, examples include; off-air recordings such as documentaries, songs, interviews, literature, and many more. Newspapers can also be regarded as authentic materials.

According to Peacock (1997) authentic materials are the materials that have been produced to achieve a social purpose in the language community. The context is usually based on real-life language. These might be for native language speakers; the language is not perfect as it depicts real life. It is easily relatable, and authentic materials like literature may be the best source for reading. On the contrary, inauthentic materials contain language indicators that can be perceived as false-text indicators. Some examples of such indicators are:

- perfectly constructed sentences at all time
- structures follow a repetitive sequence
- most of the time they do not read well

With the above-given examples, Berardo (2006) asserts that such materials that are inauthentic may appear to be forceful on the learners as chances are they may never encounter such language in real-life communication. Inauthentic materials contain a lot of content that seems to be already practiced language, which does not apply to real life. Students need to come across a language that gifts them authentic and meaningful communication. As Adams (1995) explains, these materials should have the ability to make the students want and have the desire to write, speak, listen and read English. Materials have the power to trigger high-level attentiveness, therefore, producing expected results and accomplishments when it comes to the success of acquiring a second language. The primary goal is to produce speakers that can communicate effectively but also at the same time competent users of language, in this case, the English 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.

- 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.

An English class facilitated by a teacher that is not effective always reflects on the students. It becomes obvious the teacher did not do much to close the gap that exists between the student and the new language they expect to learn. In this case English. An effective language teacher is a teacher who can showcase the above-mentioned abilities together. He/she should have the expected training and ability to be able to successfully teach language.

Like any other field, education has not been spared from change, a lot has changed in relation to how English as a second language was taught. According to Kang (1999), there have been significant changes in ESL/EFL instruction during the

previous 20 years. The world's ESL/EFL population's shifting needs have led to the development of curricula, teaching strategies, and instructional resources. In its purest and most basic form, teaching a language involves the direct transmission of teachers' cognitive linguistic knowledge and skills to students. Despite the fact that this is the case, there is no one set method of injecting information into the minds of language learners.

Therefore, there has been a significant change in the overall approach to teaching and how this knowledge and skills are transferred. 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 is 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.

As Longo (2008) stated, 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.

One approach may prove to be the best when dealing with a certain group of learners and yet the same may not be as effective for a different set of learners. As is the case with every other subject in the curriculum, language is not sacred when it comes to learning styles, other students understand more quickly than others. The teacher has to pay attention to this factor as this may greatly affect the learning and teaching process. According to Naiman et al., (1978), there are “good learners” and “bad learners”. The distinguishing factor between the two types of language learners is that good language learners are those that can be classified as acquirers of language (Krashen, 1981, p.37). Bad language learners, unlike the good ones, are what Krashen (1981), goes on to categorically explain the reality that there are those students who at any point are not learning nor acquiring language. Nevertheless, a lot

of factors cause students to understand things differently and they do so at different times. Reiff (1992) worked on understanding why it takes time for other students to be slower. Reiff (1992) established that among many factors or elements that affect how quickly students can grasp a new language psychological, emotional, environmental, and physical elements. All of these affect the fluidity in EFL lessons.

As earlier stated, all students are unique and therefore differ. The learning styles ought to be different and they should be changed to accommodate a particular set of students whether individually or collectively.

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. Block (1986) notes that it is not enough, it is rather how the learners react to the text even when they do not fully comprehend. Using reading to achieve competence within all levels of students saw new strategies beginning to appear. Novak (1992) asserted that self-direction is the best strategy a language teacher can use for adult learners. Kang (1999) argues that even in the self-directed approach students should on their part-time and again consciously develop learning strategies that help them overcome any task that may come with the reading of the text.

C. Language Awareness and Cross-cultural Awareness

It was 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. Language Awareness applies to learners and teachers. Mastas (2001) agrees with the idea that language should not only be restricted to the learners just mastering the language they have set a target to learn but rather, they must be able to familiarize themselves with the components that make up a language. Language Awareness can be useful as an approach to the acquisition of learners and content development for those that are language instructors.

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. This goes on to say Language Awareness goes beyond being a fluent user of language; this is validated according to Wright (2002). He (2002) says English as a subject has to be acknowledged in line with its foreignness. Although that is one of the definitions, there has been a wide range of definitions in attempting to define what Language Awareness is. According to James and Garrett (2014) the National Council for Language in Education (NCLE) agreed with the definition “Language Awareness is a person's sensitivity to and conscious awareness of the nature of language and its role in human life” (Donmall, 1985: 7). Language Awareness may be set apart from what can be assigned as knowledge about language. An individual may possess declarative knowledge (Woods, 1996) and in this, the knowledge is about grammar, phonology, lexis as well as discourse. Whereas Language Awareness mainly involves language teachers “talking about language”. This long overview has an effective element as it usually encourages language teachers to be effective, robust, and creative explorers of language.

Furthermore, Language Awareness can also be defined according to its aims and objectives as Hawkins (2005) stated that awareness of language’s purpose is to close the gap in the transition from primary to secondary education language work thus creating a common platform for vocabulary for the different fields of the language field. That could eventually extend to Mother Tongue, Foreign Language, English as a Foreign Language, as well as Community Languages.

The concept of foreignness here would mean understanding the elements that have influenced it. According to Wright (2002), every other language that is not one's own language contains aspects that will, as expected, be different from the Mother Tongue (MT). There are some elements that can easily be understood and others that may not even make sense when compared to a language someone considers to be their mother tongue. Some of the elements may include the culture around the language, the expressions that are sacredly unique to that language, the pronunciations of certain letters and words as well as the changes that a particular language has experienced over time as language never stays constant. Bourke (2008) suggests that Language Awareness is not to be confused with language consciousness-raising.

D. 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.

Firstly, what role does being aware of a language play in EFL learning/teaching? Many research publications have concluded that language awareness is applied to both First Language (FI) which is also known as the first language as it is vital in L2 which is the second language. A person's mother tongue

or a language they acquired directly from childhood is what is considered their First language (FI) as believed by Cook (2003). The first language is described by researchers as the language that the child learns from parents, siblings, and caretakers during the critical years of personal development, meaning this happens during the first years of attempting to communicate using language.

Before discussing the role of Language Awareness, it is equally important to define what a second language is. A second language or sometimes known as the additional language is the language a person adopts and acquires apart from their own mother language, in other words, as defined by Ortega (2014, p.2) “second language acquisition is the scholarly field that explores the capacity the human brain has in learning languages apart from the first, during late childhood, adolescence or adulthood”. He (2014) continues to cite that this happens after the first language or languages have already been acquired. Ortega (2014) extensively discusses the idea of others being naturalistic learners and others being more instructed learners.

The main difference is that naturalistic learners learn more in informal settings. Examples of informal settings or environments such as neighborhoods that are multicultural, workplaces that have foreign native speakers of a particular language, and sometimes school peers that speak another language. On the contrary, instructed learners are the learners whose acquisition hugely depends on them being in a formal setting or environment for instance being taught in a classroom or as an adult going for language lessons at a university. It is worth noting according to Ortega’s (2014) *Understanding Second Language Acquisition* that a lot of people acquire a second language from a bit of both naturalistic and instructed experiences. In both circumstances of learning a language, awareness of it is very critical.

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).

In language teaching and learning, students and learners use language /linguistic data to be able to work on the tasks they have been given. Language awareness as a goal on the other fold can be used to widen an instructor’s general or overall “sensitivity to language” as this improves a teacher’s understanding of how learners struggle with the presented language and at the same time, it deepens their

own understanding of language. Errors in language learning from students are inevitable. The same applies to the other inter-language features that come up in the learning process.

A teacher has to possess linguistic awareness, as this enhances their ability to spot and notice opportunities that spark up debates, explorations, and discussions that border around language. Every teacher is supposed to have an eye for such in the classroom. To summarize, this helps students to be more attentive to any material that is presented to them and they can engage in a more effective way in a particular language learning activity. As Farahian and Rezaee (2015) state, in their publication on the role of language awareness, assert that a successful language classroom has to be fully aware of the language they are learning.

E. 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. 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 the positive as well as the negative perceptions of a specific culture an individual is interested in.

It is crucial to keep in mind that modern communicative competence models have demonstrated that there is much more to learning a language than is commonly thought, and they contain the crucial element of cultural knowledge and awareness (Bachman 1990).

Peterson and Coltrane (2003) highlighted the great significance of cultural knowledge 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 entails comprehending the beliefs and values represented by the many

forms and usages of language, as well as knowing what to say to whom and in what circumstances.

F. 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.

Culture arguably has a lot of different definitions; this paper's researcher did not want to limit the definition to only one. Culture might be described as an operational code that is valid for an entire group of people. It further expands on the fact that culture influences how people make judgments about what is right or what is wrong. 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 the one hand, culture is thought of as a common idea, yet it may also be personal. It is as much a psychological and individual construct as it is a societal one, according to Matsumoto (1996). Each of us has a certain amount of culture within ourselves, just as there is culture as a universal, societal construct. The extent to which people embrace and engage in the attitudes, values, beliefs, and actions that, by consensus, comprise their culture can be used to identify individual distinctions in culture. If you embody those beliefs or exhibit those actions, then you are part of that culture; if not, then you are not part of that culture.

However, it is only right to acknowledge that culture does not have one specific definition. The definition has varied from one to another but Goodenough (1997) chose to define culture as knowledge, but the shared knowledge amongst the people that cohabit in an organized space.

According to Goodenough (1997), a society's culture is specifically what one has to know or believe in in order to function in a way that is acceptable to its members. Culture is not a result of nature; it is not made up of things, actions, or feelings. It is more like an arrangement of these things. It is the shape of things in people's minds, as well as their frameworks for understanding, reacting to, and interpreting them. Adding to this claim, it can be stated that culture encompasses a person's behavior, social relationships, moral convictions, social allure, and the roles that society or a group has allocated to each gender. The approval of the community of people who live there strengthens it.

Cultural awareness can be explained in several ways. It can be simplified as the comparison between a parent culture and the newly adopted culture (Ortuno, 1991), or the culture one is being exposed to. Ortuno (1991) argues that people are not always consciously aware of the values or beliefs we adopt from our parent culture and traditions.

To shed more light 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.

According to Lazear (1999), cultural engagement sets communication apart from the simple exchange of information. Communication is coded and patterned differently in various cultures, which further complicates matters. Both the verbal and non-verbal parts of the relationship are subject to the varying coding and patterning. Not all differences are as visible as others because some truly take place below the level of awareness. He provides more information by reassuring us that verbal greetings do not always translate literally from one language into another and vary from place to place. For instance, shaking hands is not the same throughout continents, regions, and countries. For instance, in the United States, a man can never

be certain whether a woman will reach out and shake his hand, but in Germany, he can assume that the likelihood of this happening is rather high. When families get together, there is clearly more kissing in Latin American countries than in Anglo-Saxon countries. When welcomes from Asia or Africa are included, the discrepancies become much more pronounced. These variances concentrate on our awareness since they are so visible. As people, we can accommodate them in communication, and as educators, we can encourage our pupils to pick up new patterns that incorporate both verbal and nonverbal cues.

Chlopek (2008) states when discussing the intercultural approach to English as a Foreign Language (EFL) teaching and learning, that culture can be divided into two. Culture with a big c and culture with a small font c. Big-C culture is typically simple to study because it contains accurate information on the fine arts, including music, dance, painting, sculpture, theater, and film. On the other hand, small-c culture is made up of a wide range of elements, many of which are interconnected, such as attitudes, presumptions, beliefs, perceptions, norms, and values, as well as social relationships, customs, holidays, rituals, and politeness conventions, patterns of interaction and discourse organization, the use of time in communication, as well as the use of physical space and body language.

It goes without saying that language is a component of what we refer to as culture and that it both reflects and interprets culture. Some characteristics of small-c culture can be immediately observed, making them simple to understand and pick up (e.g., celebrations and rituals). However, many aspects of a particular culture are obscure to the naked sight. Here are the small-c cultural characteristics that are ingrained in us from birth, profoundly internalized and subconscious, and frequently only become apparent when compared to another culture. The eye cannot immediately identify it. These intangible cultural factors are primarily what shape people's expectations and interpretations of other people's intangible and linguistic behaviors. They also have a significant impact on how individuals think and behave.

It is proven that an individual who encounters an unfamiliar culture will lack knowledge of such behaviors, which may lead to amusing situations, and even conflict, caused by miscommunication. This happens because these aspects of culture are unspoken rules created by a community. Because these cultural rules are full of meaning and “allow people to anticipate events, they often acquire a moral rigidity

and righteousness that engender stereotypes and even prejudices” (Kramsch 1995, p. 2)

At what stage does a person start to question the culture of others? That is the question subsequently as this study goes on. Understanding it may vary and be measured in different degrees as well.

G. Levels of Cultural Awareness

The degrees of cultural awareness can be assessed by looking at the degree one possesses. These degrees may vary from one person to another due to several factors which may include the level of exposure to the culture that births a particular language. Every stage correlates with a particular stage.

Jin-Feng (2007) classifies the stages of absorbing different cultures as the following:

1. Parochial stage

This is the stage when people ignore the impact and effects of cultural differences and an individual thinks what they know alone is valid. In other words, this stage is regarded as “My way is the only way”. At this stage, an individual is fully aware of their own cultural elements and that is enough for them. The rest does not really count at that stage.

2. Ethnocentric stage

At this stage acknowledgment of how others do things is there. This could be accepting that other people do things differently but an individual is still convinced that their way of doing things is better. There is a superiority complex an individual possesses at this particular stage and cultural differences are perceived to be a source of conflict with one’s parent culture. This phase is regarded as “I know their way but my way is better”. There is an understanding and acceptance that there is the existence of diverse cultures but those diverse cultures are looked down upon therefore reducing their significance of it.

3. Synergistic stage

This is also regarded as “My way and Their way”. By its definition, this

means the awareness of self and culture is present, and this awareness is spread to the other's way of doing things at the same time. The only thing that is distinguishing is the ability to decide what is best according to the given situation. In summary, at this stage, an individual realizes that there are two folds to cultural differences. These two are; the benefits and the problems that come along. Like anything else, there are positives and negatives to it. This creates the platform to be able to find new solutions to problems that have been in existence or solutions to any problems that may potentially arise. Those with this degree of Cultural awareness are willing to use diversity as a tool to offer alternatives.

4. Participatory stage

This is regarded as the last and final stage of cultural awareness. One of the significant and visible elements of this stage is the bringing together of individuals who do not share a common parent culture but rather those that come from diverse cultural backgrounds for one common purpose. The shared goal of coming together is to be able to create a uniform culture that shares meaning, values, purpose, norms, and all the pillars of culture. In this newly created and shared culture, people have repeated dialogues. They also create new meanings and expressions that may have not existed before the intertwining of diverse cultures. In culture rules also exist, at this particular stage of participation, common rules are agreed upon and adhered to by everyone who resides in the realm in which these rules are formulated. This stage can easily be defined as the "Our way" stage.

It is also important to recognize that culture is never constant; it is a forever-changing phenomenon. There will always be cultural innovation. English as Foreign Language classes has to be designed in a manner that recognizes and appreciates this constant change. This innovation may be described basically as the introduction of new ideas, thoughts, beliefs, norms, gender roles, and social relationships. The causes of these changes could either be internal or sometimes external. A lot of the time these innovations are a result of borrowing from other cultures. In the process of borrowing from other cultures, we are introduced to a new concept which is called cultural *diffusion*. Since language and culture can never be wholly separated diffusion is also notable in language over time.

H. Cultural and Language Diffusion

Starting with a terminological distinction between structural convergence, which refers to using native morphological material, and the direct transfer of forms from the other language which is typically divided into Code-Switching (CS) versus borrowing is crucial for any study of language diffusion. As diffusional interference occurs, inherited material is rearranged in a process known as structural convergence, also known as pattern transfer or calque (Heath, 1984).

In a publication, *The Analysis of Linguistic Borrowing*, Haugen (1950) predicts that as early as 1886, Hermann Paul made an important assertion. Paul argued that at some point in mastering another language, borrowing of language from another is predictable. The borrowing however starts with the behaviors of the other language speakers. The term as used by Haugen may be considered absurd, as it is stated that the metaphor used is certainly absurd, as the borrowing takes place without the lender's consent or even awareness, and the borrower is under no obligation to repay the loan (Haugen, 1950). Language and culture are enormously huge concepts therefore borrowing is a process and never a state or condition.

No culture in the world can be assumed to be self-developed (Boas, 2015) and the same is indeed true for language. The first studies of the distribution of languages show that the first primitive man covered all continents in traceable migration patterns. Whenever this migration happened there was cultural contact and exchange. A great example of how this happened this may be found in Boas (2015) mentioning of how an American language is widely spoken emerging and spreading from the Yukon to Hudson Bay and south of this same particular area inhabit a people who speak a completely different language, on the other fold, however, dialects of the same language which is spoken in the north reappear locally in Oregon and California and in the vast territory north and south of the Rio Grande. The explanation of this can be attached to the assumption that at one point migrated these people migrated over this immense wide area.

Boas (2015), once more provides another example of culture being transferred from one place to another, as he established that no primitive people had developed a culture independently. Tribes have been in existence for as long as the man started to become civilized and with time, they started to mingle with each

other. The people mentioned above who speak the language that is mainly spoken along the Yukon River but now reside on the Rio Grande may differ in type when compared to those from the north. Certainly, the appearance is similar to their neighbors who speak a different language. This is proof that at some point there was an intermingling of the people and eventually, they adopted certain traits found in the cultures.

In context, this borrowing of language and culture can be understood as a reproduction of what already exists linguistically. This is done for the specific reason of the need to cope with the new linguistic pattern an individual is presented with. This reproduction does not matter whether it is done on purpose or unconsciously. The borrowing, therefore, is the use of what is already known to a language user. To be distinct from the whole process of borrowing and reproducing may also be referred to as “adopting”. It can be argued that in this whole process where language and culture are going through diffusion, stealing of the elements of the two (culture and language) from what is not considered to be an individual’s parent culture and language takes place. This “stealing” is unconscious.

Language and culture are documented in various forms of literature. In a successful EFL class, a teacher can use a lot of mediums to help students digest all the bits that formulate the umbrella body of everyday life and human behavior we call culture.

I. Developing Language Awareness using Classroom Activities

As stated by Tomalin (2008) we currently live in a world that is the globalized world and it is due to this globalization that we are more exposed to diverse cultures and traditions than it was a few decades ago. Our base of interaction is widened due to the existence of more film production, websites, magazines, the internet, television shows, and social media. In all of these platforms depending on where it has been produced there is a presence of cultural elements of that particular setting.

All the above-mentioned platforms are in relation to technology and it is very much important that we acknowledge the fact that it is not everywhere in the world that access to such platforms is possible but also sometimes classrooms focus on one

source. A course material such as a book or a novel is an example of where a limitation can be found.

In such classrooms activities such as storytelling work out the best in promoting and enhancing cultural awareness. Story-telling goes deep into folklore and consists of various cultural defining items such as beliefs, myths, legends, moral principles, and many more (Peker, 2019). According to her (2019), reading is one of the most effective activities to use when teaching.

J. Selecting Texts for Teaching English in English as a Foreign Language

In earlier published research studies, it had been established that novels sit at the top of priorities when selecting material or teaching language. The priority percentage is at 60.1 (Aydinoglu, 2013). How must teachers choose which literary texts, in this context a novel? Perhaps, the most important stage of the teaching stage is deciding on the literary text to achieve the goal of producing students that are culturally aware. The selection of literary texts has to be done carefully. This is the most crucial stage in the teaching and learning process. A good number of reasons and factors have to be seriously considered before a literary text is chosen as the final material for teaching language.

Firstly, the learner's average age has to be examined. It has been scientifically proven that below a certain age the human mind does not fully comprehend certain aspects of human life, society, and language. Literary texts are written according to their projected audience's ability to understand the language and message being conveyed. For instance, elementary level going learners are not fit for literary texts that focus on social issues. They ought to enjoy other forms of literature such as folktales, songs, and other platforms of literature. In an earlier study, McGrath (2013) argued that if teachers of the English language were to be asked what considerations they dwell upon before the selection of materials their answers would vary. However, he (2013) further argued that those different ages and different needs require different material that varies in context according to the above-mentioned factors.

The literary texts selection process should also examine the ability to create stimuli that always activate schemata. Bartlett (1932), established that our knowledge

of the world and society, as well as the different experiences we live every day, will definitely shape how we may respond to a text, in this case how the text is read. What is more relatable to the audience, in this case, learners, is also important. An instructor's role is therefore primarily being able to identify a text that will evoke emotions from the learners. These emotions are very important in language classes. Emotions spark the need to follow and keep track throughout, comment, counter-argue, express doubt, talk about personal experiences and give individual opinions.

Is the length of a text a determining factor in the deciding process of which literary text to use as teaching material? As much as the length of a text is significant, it must never be a reason enough to disregard a text. It is the contents that make a good text. Many teachers tend to believe that if a text is long or if it contains difficult vocabulary then it can never be a good choice. Although on the contrary, a good instructor looks beyond the length and vocabulary of a literary text. The two factors can never in any way affect the extracted desired quality of the elements of language that are sought to be passed on to the learners.

A good choice of teaching material must have the ability to trigger the above-mentioned qualities. A good selection of the teaching material is what establishes a preferred conducive environment for learning to take place. The teaching material is a determining factor in many aspects of the learning process. For instance, every instructor desires a class with maximum participation. This is attainable by establishing good rapport. This mutual positive attitude in a classroom environment is encouraging and healthy.

Good rapport in a language classroom like in any other academic field is what builds trust. Fully desired communication in a language classroom is placed upon the trust between the instructor and the learners. It is evident that for mutual trust and harmony to exist, participants sense a need for a personal connection with their instructors. This then requires teachers to go beyond simply imparting information to kids and to establish human connections with them (Webb & Barrett, 2014). A bad choice of teaching material could have a lasting negative impact on the entire teaching and learning process. Whenever students are not enjoying the material presented to them, they tend to lessen their level of participation in the classroom. Literary texts' desired outcome is to impart to learners as human beings' knowledge that they will use outside of the classroom. This can only be possible if they show

signs that they are fully into the text and are enjoying the chosen text.

K. Reading

It is crucial that this paper discusses the meaning of reading; it has been extensively discussed that it is through reading, that a literary text, and indeed any other text can be comprehended thoroughly. According to Lee (1969), the question can be addressed in two ways. One borders around such phrases as an interpretation of symbols into sound, saying and correctly pronouncing words as well as getting personal meaning(s) from the printed page. The second fold may be regarded of as drawing personal meanings from the written page, responding to the concepts, assessing the author's thoughts as they were expressed, and increasing comprehension by really experiencing the understanding as it was expressed. The primary distinction is that the first group primarily consists of the mechanics and surface reading phases which are by no means useless or gratuitous while the latter group consists mostly of the deeper, more intimate, more relevant, or consequential reading phases. Regardless of the desired outcome from the content being read, reading must be done correctly.

Cross-cultural reading has been thought of as another way within the realm of strategies that can be used for the benefit of developing complete language users, people who have the knowledge of a language from the inside and outside.

Reading literature from different cultural backgrounds exposes the reader to both "etic" and "emic" viewpoints. The two phrases simply mean: The etic viewpoint emerges from observing behavior from outside of a given system, and it is a crucial beginning approach to any foreign system, according to Schipper (1993), who defined them. The emic perspective is the outcome of looking at behavior from within the system. The analyst may design a global cross-cultural scheme's etic organization. It is necessary to identify the emic structure of a given system. When instrumental measures can prove that, two units are etically different. Only when they cause individuals functioning from within the system to react differently can units differ emographically. The emic method observes and researches the group and individual experiences that are transmitted by the participants themselves in order to shed additional light on the two notions. On the one hand, the etic approach demands that one naturally consider the relationships between the superordinate community

and the various subordinate communities that make up it, while also acknowledging that powerful close friends and relatives can put the social and cultural identities of dominated groups at risk. Authors of literary texts often have one thing in common; bringing the readers closer to the text by creating characters based on their own cultural connection and identity as well as their social experiences. These are a reflection of the norms and values they have placed in them.

Everyone approaches as an individual as such a true reading plan has to be put in place. This helps in generating a collective meaning of the text. The uniqueness of every individual is shaped according to the already lived experiences and the natural eagerness to learn and expand their knowledge.

Figure 1. below details the relationship between the text and the reader. It further shows how the reader connects to the text.

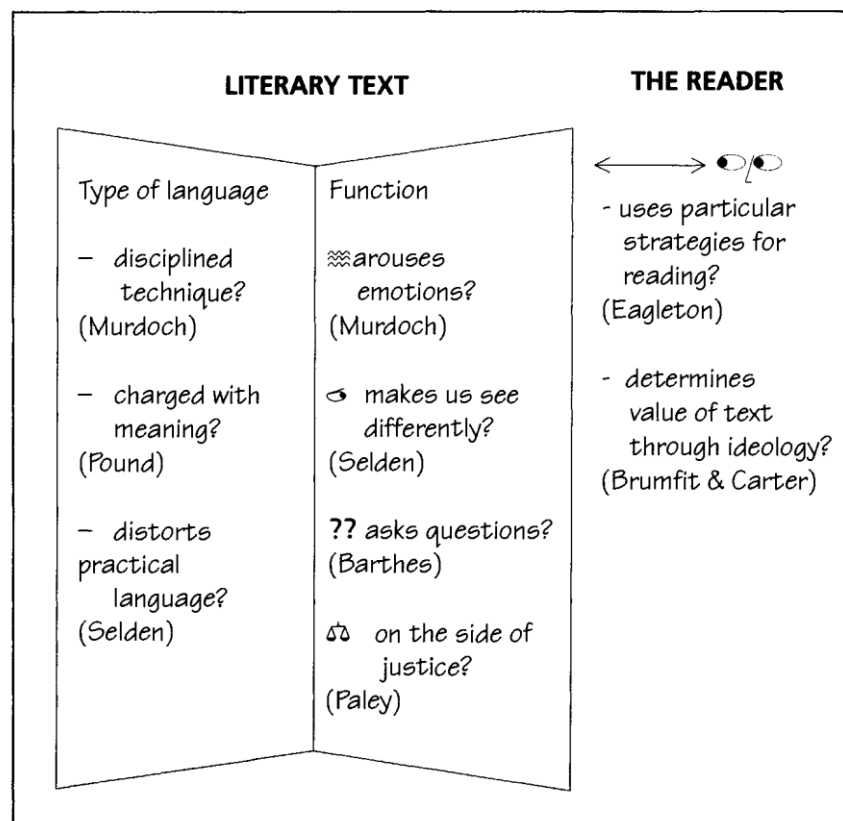


Figure 1 shows the relationship between the text and the reader

Source. Gilian Lazar, 1993 (p.4)

L. Reading skills and Reading Strategies

Harris & Hodges (1995, p.244) after a vigorous search for meaning came up with the following definitions;

Skill *n.* an acquired ability to perform well; proficiency. *Note:* The term often refers to finely coordinated, complex motor acts that are the result of perceptual-motor learning, such as handwriting, golf, or pottery. However, skill is also used to refer to parts of acts that are primarily intellectual, such as those involved in comprehension or thinking.

Strategy *n.* in education, a systematic plan, consciously adapted and monitored, to improve one's performance in learning.

By looking at the above-mentioned definitions it remains not so easy to separate the conceptions that they are different as one process may lead to the other or may be necessary to achieve the other. As Afflerbach et al., (2008), suggest, there is a need in adding some additional commentary. It is crucial to utilize the terms skill and strategy to distinguish between purposefully controlled activities and automated processes. A balance between the instinctive application and use of reading skills and the conscious, diligent use of reading strategies lies at the heart of competent reading. Accompanied by the ability to shift seamlessly between the two when the situation calls for it. A good EFL teacher/instructor should have a clear understanding of the uniqueness in the difference between the two as this also makes it easier for the students to understand how they themselves (readers) may learn and develop new skills, how they correct their mistakes and repair their difficulties while reading. Not only that, but it also helps the readers to teach others to read.

M. 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 as argued by many scholars has a wide range of prospective improvements in mastering language aspects such as mastering knowledge of lexical phrases but also fixed expressions (Franzen, 2002; Mackenzie, 2000). Another important language component is the effective use of grammar and acquiring the knowledge to competently use it, that is; according to Tayebipour (2009). Hadaway et al., (2002) state that the other advantage considers the natural and meaningful application of language which is accomplished via illustrations and the use of descriptive language in literature.

Literature has always been considered an ally of language as established by Brumfit and Carter (2008). Literature has been an example of "good writing". A couple of elements are to be considered before being labeled 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.

On the other hand, Custodio and Sutton (1998) also point out that literature offers limitless opportunities and allows students to inquire, criticize, and research. Briefly, literature represents the learners as a rich resource of authentic material. It is important for students to be fully engaged in an English lesson as the learning directly impacts their outlook beyond the language being taught in class. To solidify the claim on this ability to expand beyond, Khan and Alasmari (2018), say literature has the ability to also raise cultural awareness. Learners have to comprehend why literature in general and literary texts to be precise is one of the viable mediums to master English as a language.

Why should literature be used in English Foreign Language classes?

In order to address the question above, this paper examines what Lengyel (1975) states as the benefits of using literature in EFL sessions in summary to the points cited above.

- Literature will improve all language abilities since it will broaden our understanding of linguistics by demonstrating the use of sophisticated and varied vocabulary as well as intricate and precise grammar. No changes are made to the syntax. It will frequently provide a generalized representation of the style that the student can use as a guide.

- 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.

- The consciousness of human insight is one perspective that literature offers. Great literature can be justified in this way, much like how listening to a great symphony can be justified. Literature has a rhythm that enables the reader to completely engage with the text's intended effect, whether it be amusement, shock, or occasionally 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.

Different scholars and writers as well as commentators have argued if really literature is the way to go or solution to getting learners to grasp the details of the language.

Literature adds and expands to reality. Literature is not limited to simply describing it. It enriches the necessary competencies that daily life demands and provides, literature waters on and nurtures the deserts that our lives have already become.

As much as teaching language is a target, a teacher bears a responsibility that stretches beyond just students competently using language. The social-emotional side of the learner's as human beings is of equal importance and as such literature can be an authentic inspiration in order to achieve that.

It is equally important to discuss why other scholars are against the use of literary texts in language classes. Obviously, there are scholars who think utilizing literature for language teaching is not the best idea. For instance, there is an argument presented by McKay (1982) who says there is a structural complexity and unique use of language in literature. This directly drives the perspective or thought that literature lacks in terms of contribution to, perhaps, one of the most significant aspects of teaching any language which is grammar.

The second argument is that literature does not really help the learners to reach their academic potential and occupational goals since literature focus more on other elements such as culture and a way of life to communicate a particular message.

The third one is the specific cultural viewpoints that are reflected in every piece of literature. Grasping and making sense of cultural perspectives may be difficult for students, especially for EFL or ESL students. If students do not comprehend what is going on in a literary piece it may prove difficult for them to fully absorb the key message from the book. As we have mentioned before literature serves as a portal or a custodian for conserving history and traditions. If the instructor's teaching focus is to impart cultural knowledge to students, literature provides a broad platform to precisely pick which specific area a teacher would want to focus on while teaching the language at the same time.

In literature, we see a great presence of societal elements and aspects. While literature has been viewed as a great and successful alternative for teaching English, a never-dying conversation still lingers around the influence of the author on the consumer of the literary piece.

N. African Literature and Culture in EFL

Every human being inherits a certain set of attributes from the environment they are born and raised unconsciously and later on consciously. English teachers must assist students in reflecting on their cultural backgrounds and changing ideological stances in order to discover new perspectives and broaden their cultural horizons. Readers' ideological stances and cultural backgrounds influence how they read multicultural literature. This essay seeks to demonstrate the advantages of doing

so by using literary works from different cultures. Dong (2005) writes in his article that it is easier for students who come from the same culture to relate to the work and what it depicts, in this context the whole package of language, culture, beliefs, norms, traditions, and many more.

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.

Under this interesting banner of multicultural literature, we saw a rise of African literature during the early 1960s. To begin with, what is African literature?

Chinua Achebe, who is amongst the most celebrated figures in African literature attempted to define African literature although he concedes that the definition of African literature cannot be narrowed down to one clean and simple definition, rather he said he did not see African literature as one unit but as a group of associated units-in fact, as the sum total of all the national and ethnic literatures of Africa (Achebe, 1997). One thing that is uniform when it comes to African literature is the fact that it emerged from the African tradition of folklore which has existed in

African societies since ancient times. There are qualities that are embedded in the African culture and roots which have been carried and passed along through the literature that has originated from Africa. Haring (2011) pays tribute to the contribution African literature whether oral or written has made; they carry a deeper understanding of metaphor and metonymy.

African literature has proved to be an authentic example of how orality and literacy can be successfully merged, that is according to Obiechina (1993). African literature includes a significant prevalence of narrative proverbs. Early in the 1960s, African literature saw a significant transition from oral tradition to written literature. They enhance the contents and formal features of the tales in which they appear by serving as images, metaphors, and symbols. They span wide ideological and generic boundaries and are widely employed in the novels written by African novelists, including both male and female authors, older and younger writers, and authors from diverse regions of Africa south of the Sahara.

It is reasonable to assume that the use of narrative proverbs in African novels transcends gender, genres, ideologies, regions, and generations and is a crucial aspect of the poetics of the African novel, a feature derived from the interaction of the creative principles of oral and literary traditions. Certainly, 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.

Metaphors, like many literary elements, add to the depth of the work. The majority of academics appear to concur that metaphorical expressions are more likely to be found in literary works than non-literary ones because they are more inventive, unique, original, striking, rich, intriguing, complicated, difficult, and interpretable. It is also frequently asserted that literary authors employ metaphors to extend and transcend our common language and/or intellectual resources and to offer fresh insights and viewpoints on the human condition.

O. Problems in African Literature

One of the identifiable issues in African literature is the absence of earlier written work by Africans. The folktales and folklores were passed down from one generation to another by the word of mouth. Much of the earlier written works have gone by unnoticed and have not been used to their maximization. The overall accessibility of African literature has not been easy. This has in turn led to minimal attention to it. Barber & Furniss (2006) quite frankly, expressed their concerns about the existence of the bodies of work not being generally recognized by the "African literature" setting or even within, their home countries. Africa has plenty of languages and some of the outstanding works have not crossed over to other African countries. Very few translations have been done and made available. There also appears to be little demand for them. The reasons for this situation are known to us all. They include hand, the hyper privileging of European languages, especially as the language of colonial power, now as the language of global and, on the other, the comparatively small size of most African constituencies. The readership of African literature in Africa has been on the lower side.

Perhaps one of the most common criticisms of African literature has been the choice of language the authors often times have chosen to write in. Writers of literature, educators, and scholars have been pushed to evaluate whether it is not naïve for them to talk about their environments in a foreign language. Not only that, even the learners themselves have questioned the use of a language that is not native to them as consumers of the text nor the characters playing the various roles in the novels and texts. This is a legitimate inquiry, considering most of the African writers choose to write in the language of those that have told about the African culture from an outsider's perspective and observation rather than those that are indigenous to the communities of origin of the events that have led to the construction their culture. One can never ignore the fact of Africa's colonial history. The writers of the literature that was recognized had learned the European languages and felt their ideas were better expressed in the languages they were able to learn through the colonial period they were born in. Discussing the problems in African literature, Ojaide (1992) touches on the issue of language and poses a question that inquires on the proper language to use in the creation of African literature, one must understand the fundamental realities of its philosophies. There must be need to answer the questions

boardering around what language or languages best serve the interests of cultural, social, and economic development within the African world. Once more this alludes to assertions that any language is more than making sounds, it harbors within a certain set philosophy.

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" (p. 151). 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 fueled by his desire to have Africans as the first and primary consumers of the literature.

Ojaide (1992) argued that since colonial times, many African writers have struggled with the issue of language choice. It has been observed that the majority of authors have switched from writing in their native tongues to mostly using the English language. The issue is still up for debate; African authors have written about their own African customs and civilizations in numerous other languages, including Portuguese, Afrikaans, and Arabic. Does this make a difference in how the message is received and how it is described in terms of what their culture is based on? European languages were used for more pragmatic than ideological reasons. He believes that it truly has little bearing on the author's overarching worldview and message. He continues by saying that because Africa is a continent with a wide variety of language's, it is best for the literature to be produced in English so that it may reach its target audiences wide range of cultural backgrounds. However, He

(1992) noted that he had seen and was sure that writing in the colonial language was thus praised as the best accomplishment a local could do in his conclusion. Such viewpoints continue to shape how African literature is defined.

P. Discussing Achebe's *Things Fall Apart*

This fiction book, which is regarded as a gem, helped to establish African literature as a distinctive genre. African literature is heavily influenced by culture. According to Rhoads (1993), Chinua Achebe illustrates the Igbos' cultural heritage and richness in *Things Fall Apart* to give them self-confidence, but he also relates to universal principles that undermine their destructive potential. Achebe sets out to demonstrate that before European colonial powers entered Africa, the Igbos had a philosophy of great depth, value, and beauty. He praises the sense of poetry that the Igbos had and his duty as a writer in a new country to restore the dignity that they lost during the colonial period.

The novel can be a great resource for helping the readers appreciate the culture of others and also help them recognize the attributes of their own values and traditions and culture. As depicted in *Things Fall Apart*, the fictitious style of the novel is considered to be a great example of how a typical African society could be illustrated. One aspect of the African culture is the fact that it never shied away from the instruments that shaped the society then, including superstition, the supernatural, farm duties, what is expected of women, the presence of the feared gods, the purpose of having children, a man as the head of a family, the elderly and those who have been allocated of the custodial duties of the society as a whole known today as elders or perhaps chiefs. He includes all of these elements to shed light on why all of the above-mentioned elements were extremely important to the Igbo population. He aims to walk away from the primitive narrative that has been the focal point of the discussion in regard to the Africans and their way of living everyday life. What is also striking about the novel as mentioned in the first chapter of this study is the use of the English language. *Things Fall Apart* made history with the new literary language possibilities it mapped out. It is the first best-selling novel in which African characters speak dignified English in standard grammar, shorn of buffoonery. Adéèkó (2008) stated that it is also perhaps the first story in which the narrative voice gives a sympathetic platform to the speech rhythms of its African characters.

According to Obiechiena (1993), the book is the best illustration of how to employ narrative proverbs to convey the unique characteristics of African fiction. Although many African authors employ the narrative embedding approach, *Things Fall Apart* represents the most comprehensive and effective application of this technique for a variety of formal, thematic, and aesthetic goals. There are nine embedded narratives in this book, which is a remarkable quantity. Seven of them are folktales and myths, one is a fake history, and the other is an anecdote. Each of the linked stories contributes to the novels overall meaning, offering some understanding to the action, sharpening characterization, expanding on the themes, and enhancing the setting and surroundings of the story.

Q. Summary

Chapter II mainly discusses the blending of literature, culture and language into the English as a Foreign Language (EFL) teaching and learning. The significance as well as the advantages of bringing in literature into language learning is also a focal point in this chapter. Like all other literatures emerging from elsewhere criticism has not spared African literature. The choice of language in which authors have chosen to write in as an area of concern has been discussed in this chapter. Problems within African literature excluding the choice of language have as well been extensively looked into within this chapter.

III. METHODOLOGY

A. Introduction

This chapter includes information on the aim of the study, the context of the study, the research approach plan, the data collection method, the data collection analysis, and the results reliability. In the first part, the main aim and significance of the study was elaborated on further. In the second part, details were provided on the context of the study. The third part explains how the researcher approached the study in terms of the procedure leading up to the researcher's method that was used for the collection of data. The next step was the analysis of the data and findings of the researcher to examine the credibility of the hypothesis of the study. Qualitative content analysis has been applied during the analysis of the chapters.

B. Context of the Study

This study was carried out for the purpose of testing the hypothesis that African literary texts written by African authors 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. This study was designed to contribute to the field of teaching language, English in particular but also to whoever may be a consumer of texts especially the ones that have been generated from Africa. The researcher noted from experience that African literature has for long been sidelined when it comes to teaching EFL or a Second language as some people call it.

C. Material Background

It is very important to categorically specify why a certain teaching material must be considered for English language classes. The selection process is where the learning process begins. This stage is significantly crucial. A purposeful criterion has to be developed. This criterion keeps the course facilitator on track with the key performance indicators. These indicators allow the language teacher enough time for reflection. The primary expectation is to teach the learners the English language but also, to have learners who have managed to become culturally aware.

The primary resource for this study will be the novel *Things Fall Apart*, by the renowned and celebrated Nigerian author, Chinua Achebe. This novel has been a great source for language lessons as well as literature lessons around the world. It has been mainly used in secondary school education as well as tertiary education. First published in 1958, the novel uses very simple language. This is a necessity that helps language students learn and become competent language users.

A novel that uses simple language is both enjoyable and easily accepted by language students in English as a Foreign Language (EFL) classes. A novel's comprehensibility is what facilitates how quickly students get to digest the text, context, contents, and the overall message being communicated. What makes the novel a masterpiece in the field of language and literature is the way meta-language is applied. Imagery is amongst the many other outstanding writing techniques used in the novel. The novel carries a unique way of description that helps the reader construct mental images. Each piece of literature whether written or spoken demands a reader's attention. It is the reader's reaction that determines how good a literary text is. Imagination is what builds a foundation upon which learners are able to relate to the message being communicated by the author.

D. Criteria

Table 1: Criteria adopted from Lazar (1993, p.65)

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

A Criteria adopted from Lazar (1993) has been prepared to evaluate the text (*Things Fall Apart*) in terms of culture. However, the book analyzed provides great content for the reader's arousal. This includes the comedic imagery in certain parts of the novel. By the nature of the approach in analyzing the book which was an observatory, there were no participants for the study. The researcher randomly selected fourteen (14) chapters from the novel and each chapter was independently and carefully analyzed bearing the outcomes of the study. All the analyzed fifteen chapters were randomly chosen from one text *Things Fall Apart* among the writer's rich catalog of other works he has published.

E. Research Design of the Study

Ethnography literally means a portrait of a people. An ethnography is a written description of a particular culture - the customs, beliefs, and behavior of people (Genzuk, 2003). This research takes the ethnographic model in order to interpret the findings of the researcher. A common feature of such an approach is the observation process, which the researcher uses. The first step for the researcher was to read the whole book thoroughly to be able to examine the book in its entirety, then as stated before the researcher then randomly selected fourteen (14) chapters out of twenty-five (25) chapters. According to the attributes, each of the research questions and the interpretation of its results is explained accordingly with each of the results of the question indicated. Question 1 is explained according to the results in table 1. The second research question is answered according to the results in table 2. Lastly, research question 3 is addressed according to its findings in table 3.

F. Summary

Chapter III of this study highlights the approach the study adopts in order to extract data from the text *Things Fall Apart* in terms of how the research questions were developed and answered. The chapter also details the type of research methodology the study adopts to scientifically interpret the data collected in the detailed analysis of the text. A discussion on the selection of the material used for the study and why it is the preferred material is found in this chapter.

IV. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

A. Introduction

This chapter's main aim is to present the results and findings of this study. The findings of the study are also included in this chapter. The results and findings are key as it presents what each of the chapters randomly selected fifteen chapters contain as guided by the criteria adopted from Lazar (1993). The research questions are addressed in this chapter.

B. Findings

This section addresses the research questions posed at the beginning of the study. Each of the questions was addressed separately. In doing so, my intention as the researcher for this study was to ensure that there is no generalization of the data, I collected or presented and the interpretation is solely based on the results of the findings.

1. To what extent does the novel *Things fall Apart* contain objects or products that exist in African society?

This question aims to analyze the objects and products that are found to belong to the traditional makeup of the Igbo society as proclaimed in the novel. Table 1 below presents the findings of the objects and products found in the selected chapters.

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	Ìlo
CHAPTER 10	Musical instruments	African flute
	Sacred place	Ìlo
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

chapters

As table 2 (see above) shows the primary motive for the question was to check if the novel carries enough cultural defining elements that would help a learner in the process of acquiring English as a Foreign Language (EFL) classroom takes in what the researcher terms “the cultural feeding” aspect of the book. By going into detail in the above-selected chapters, the researcher found that in Chapter One there is a great presence of music and sounds which throughout the novel is also present.

In the first chapter, on page 6, the book introduces the reader to a scenario where music's importance is highlighted by saying:

The heart-pounding and complicated rhythms of the *Ekwe*, *Udu*, and *Ogene* could be heard in his mind's ear, and he could also hear his own flute weaving in and out of them, adorning them with a vibrant and wistful melody. The overall impact was jovial and brisk, yet if one focused on the flute's ups and downs and short bursts, one could hear anguish and grief in it.

The above-mentioned instruments are very significant among the Igbo people and culture. For instance, the *Ogene* is one of the instruments that have non-musical functions which are perhaps the most significant as it goes beyond entertainment. According to Ifeanyichukwu (2019), It's two, perhaps most significantly singled out functions as;

- i. Dissemination of information, is used to get the villager's attention to signal a very significant event around the village. For example, the town criers would hit the *Ogene* in a sequence that alerts the villagers if they need to gather at the marketplace. The sound of *Ogene* is taken seriously in the traditional Igbo society, whenever the *Ogene* sounds; it means that something very important must be in the offing.
- ii. Extra mundane communication: The *Ogene* instrument is a veritable instrument in the hands of diviners and sorcerers; for the purposes of extra mundane communication. The Igbo culture was big on religious beliefs, *Ogene* is therefore one of the key tools found in most shrines and other places of divination. While in the process of divination, the diviner uses the *Ogene* to hail the gods and the ancestors while invoking them to provide answers to a given challenge. This can be connected to the findings in Chapter 11 and Chapter 17.

Music, in this case, sounds voiced out in a certain pattern like in many other cultures is linked to spirituality. The African Igbo society is born into superstition and in their culture and prophesying is among one the elements. In the same chapter (chapter 11) Achebe writes:

“The moon was now up and she could see Ezinma clearly. How a woman could carry a child of that size so easily and for so long was a miracle. But Ekwefi

was not thinking about that. Chielo was not a woman that night” (p.102)

He continues to write:

“As soon as the priestess stepped into this ring of hills her voice was not only doubled in strength but was thrown back on all sides. It was indeed the shrine of a great god.” (p. 102)

The book effortlessly combines the idea of believing in a higher power and the idea of superstition (sorcery) in the African society of the Igbos. In the Igbo tradition, everyone has their own *Chi* (guardian angel, whom they must obey and never question its authority). For instance, Ezinma is threatened and warned by the priestess Chielo. She is told about how unkind and ruthless *Agbala* (the goddess) can be if she unleashes her wrath on anyone, meaning the absolute powers rest upon her. Superstition bears the element of the impossible happening mysteriously. A normal lady during the day has a duty to perform when called upon by the Igbo gods. She takes up the role of a priestess. Her commands and authority when she is sent on behalf of the gods are to be respected. At night when she performs her duties as a priestess, she is no longer human, she is no longer Chielo. She is the princess of *Agbala*, the oracle of the hills and the caves. The reader is carried along deep into the fear and the respect the society had to give. The description of the journey that she takes with Ezinma is so surreal when one goes deep into the novel, it is almost impossible to imagine how the journey she takes at midnight could be humanly possible. The journey takes place in the dark, passing through the bushes and at such speed for a very long distance. The reader is meant to understand how mighty the African gods are. The language used portrays pure magic to the reader but as one dives deeper into understanding the cultural beliefs of the Igbo people. One gets an understanding of how sacred the servants are, in this context the princess is. From an outsider’s observation, it might be viewed as sorcery but Ikebude (2009, p.22) differed while describing the belief system of the Igbo people. He said the following:

“The people are intensely religious. A casual observer might pronounce them superstitious, but the fact is the belief in the spiritual exercises profound influence over every detail of their lives. Their religion is not an idolatrous one as that term is commonly interpreted, the idols, so-called, being merely tangible symbols to assist them in the service and worship of the invisible.”

The novel narrows to detail the concept of divine power and how society upholds it and does not question it at all. This shows the extent of how accepting and how willing to submit to their gods even though it may be hard to understand or perceived as pure black magic from an outside perspective.

Another example of a cultural defining object is the type of housing and its meaning to those that belong to the society. In chapter two we are introduced to an evidently important erected physical structure called *Obi* which carries huge significance. As a physical structure, it is noticeable in every village among the Igbo people.



Figure 2. An Obi

Source: Image retrieved from Google

A thorough analysis of the pre-European Igbo buildings yields crucial information about the cosmology and worldview of the communities and people that made them. The reader gets the understanding that Igbo traditional building is not a mere silent, abstract material as it may seem to the eye, but a way through which people invented and defined themselves. In Igbo culture, the home serves a purpose lot more than just concrete pieced together to provide refuge and shelter. The *Obi* is regarded as the heart of the village, it is built and owned by the patriarch of the family and passed on to his *diokpara* (first son) and it is the *Obi* that serves as a spiritual hub for the clan, it is significant because the Igbo people also believe that this open shelter (see Fig. 1) holds the village together as nothing can come out of it without the approval of the owner and spirits. It serves many purposes as it is also where a lot of consultations among the elders take place to make critical decisions on

issues that may be occurring in the village.

Lastly, another function of the *Obi* is to welcome anyone who visits before they are let inside the main house where a family lives in.

Another important feature in Igbo society is the meeting ground *ilo*.



Figure 3. ilo

Source: Image retrieved from Google

In chapter ten, the text introduces to the reader a meeting place where the villagers gather for communal meetings. This meeting ground is where discussions that are to do with society are held, sports activities also take place there. The *ilo* looks may seem an empty ground to the eye of an outsider but this bare ground is very meaningful to the society in Umuofia. The *ilo* is usually crowded and the meetings are held when the sun is no longer scorching hot so as many people as possible can attend. The elders and those with positions sit while the young stand. Achebe here once again reminds the reader of one of the greatest African customs of respecting the elders. The *ilo* is also a spiritual gathering place. Achebe wrote in the

text *Things Fall Apart* (p. 86) as follows:

“Uzowulu’s body, I salute you, he said. Spirits always addressed humans as bodies. Uzowulu bent down and touched the earth as a sign of submission.”

The land meant everything to them, the gods (ancestors) transitioned through the ground where they return, and as such the ground owned all that man ever needed. Mans’s destiny was ruled and owned by the ground. The god of the earth was to be respected, and submission to the god of the earth was a must. As mentioned above the *ilo* is a sacred place as it is also used as a court where disputes are settled in order to keep order, peace, and harmony for the community. Any member can bring a complaint before the elders who are the judges. The ground is seen to be a place where fairness and justice which are pillars of society are upheld since god’s presence is there.

Another product or object which is sacred is a python snake. Even though python snakes are common in many parts, among the people in the African clan it is a divine animal. That makes it a very special animal. In almost every culture there are animals that are deemed too dangerous or too sacred. Some animals have to be killed as their existence may be considered a curse and for some animals, hurting them is taboo and can bring a curse upon an entire community. Achebe (1958, p.149) in the text *Things Fall Apart* writes:

“The royal python was the most revered animal in Mbanta and all the surrounding clans. It was addressed as ‘Our Father’ and was allowed to go wherever it chose, even into people’s beds. It ate rats in the house and sometimes swallowed hens’ eggs. If a clansman killed a royal python accidentally, he made sacrifices of atonement and performed an expensive burial ceremony such as was done for a great man who killed the python knowingly. Nobody thought such a thing could happen.”

Among the Igbo, the snake represents a god, the god of water. Towards the end of the text, Achebe uses animal imagery more extensively to remind the reader the Igbo just like any community believes in the mysterious power animals carry. There is a man in Mbanta who communicates with the python snake who is known as the snake priest. The westerners had brought in new teachings and ideologies which leads to the killing of the snake. The new religion brought by the westerners

demonizes the snake in its teaching which drives the snake priest's son, Enoch to kill it. In chapter 18 of the text, it is mentioned that the *Osu*, or the outcasts are the ones who have decided to go against their own clan (including teachings). There is tension building up in the village as other people are accepting the foreign man's teachings. The men and elders in the clan feel betrayed and do not understand how one could go against his own ancestors and gods. The killing of the python is a symbol of a new beginning. Okoli who has changed his name to Enoch has killed his own identity and culture. Killing the python is a symbol of denunciation of his old beliefs which have been passed unto him from his parents at birth yet symbolize the absolute acceptance of the new set of beliefs. However, Okoli (Enoch) dies before he could deny or address his accusations of being the one who actually killed the python snake. This can be regarded as the prize for going against the divine gods of the ancestors. This whole new beginning is noticeably a negative one from the moment the sacred python is killed. Doom is starting to befall the Mbanta clan as a division on what must be done is causing a rift. Okonkwo feels violence against those who have gone against the will of their ancestors is the only meaningful solution while others think the best solution is to isolate those that have violated the gods. Mbanta is no longer the same, it has been weakened as the python is dead. In their culture, the killing of the snake was a great abomination.

The study also noted that in Igbo society, all man's strengths and capabilities in society are tested by his ability to infinitely provide for his family. Different foods represent different things in cultures and traditions around the world. As noted in the text, Yams are the food that is consistently mentioned. Chapter 3 however, shows yams are more than just food, yams' symbolism is deep. There is a god of yams that oversees the harvest, one can be punished for not obeying the traditions and rules of society by not being accorded a fruitful harvest. Unoka visits his *Chi* to enquire why he yielded a low harvest. The *Chi* (p.17) responds by saying:

“You have offended neither the gods nor your fathers. And when a man is at peace with gods and his ancestors, his harvest will be good or bad according to the strength of his arm. You, Unoka, are known in all the clan for the weakness of your matchet and hoe. When your neighbors go out with their axe to cut down virgin forests, you sow your yams on exhausted farms that take no labor to clear. They cross seven rivers to make their farms; you stay at home and offer sacrifices to a reluctant soil.

Go home and work like a man.”

Unoka is described as a sickly weak man who cannot fend for himself as a man should in the Igbo culture. In Igbo culture, lazy behavior is not accepted and any man who shows traits of weakness is considered not man enough. The *Chi* rewarded each man according to the labor they put into the ground. How much harvest one yielded was what determined one’s well-being, peace of mind, and wealth. Yams as the staple food of the land meant, symbolized continuity and sustenance going forward. Yams also symbolize the power of masculinity and determination to survive in Igbo society. Yam was referred to as Man’s crop. To produce more, more fieldwork is not a choice but something that should be done at all costs. Okonkwo boasts about how much of a man and different he is from his father. He does not waste time working on beans and cassava as he believes women should cultivate that instead. Again, Yams is just not food as it carries the power to make or break men. “A bad harvest of yam or a terrible farming season can bring sorrow like a funeral” (p. 24). It is regarded as a failure as men hang themselves in disappointment and shame if such a tragedy befalls them only real men could rise again. Okonkwo reassures himself of his strength reminiscing the days when yams did not do so well.

“...since I survived that year, he always said, I shall survive anything.”

The study analyzed the items found in chapter five. Throughout the reading of the book, palm wine is mentioned countless times. Palm wine, which happens to be Okonkwo’s favorite beverage is an alcoholic beverage is very significant. *Nkwu Elu* as it is also known is a big feature in traditional celebrations like the yam festival, people drink palm wine symbolizing the joy that has fallen upon them. On the one-fold however it is clearly depicted that it is a sacred beverage. That’s how the villagers look at it. *Nkwu Elu* when referenced in the Igbo dialect means “Above wine” which in this case is a direct reference to the extraction which is done from the palm tree above the soil. They believe it connects and brings them close to God. Not only does it symbolize the divine connection between man and heaven, but palm wine was also a privileged beverage in society for the wealthy. For this, a man who can serve others palm wine is regarded of higher status in society.

Among the Igbos, locusts are deemed destructive. In every culture, certain animals are looked at in a negative manner. The locusts come to destroy the hard work people have put into the soil. From the beginning, Yams meant existence for

the Igbo people, and the locust's ability to destroy yams meant the destruction of mankind.

Chapter 15 reminds the reader of the historical journey of the Igbo as a tribe, Nigeria as a country, and Africa as a whole. The text introduces for the first time the presence of a white man in Umuofia. The presence of the white man was the presence of an undesirable, unwanted, and unwelcome animal that had come to give the people suffering. After the elders sought advice, the oracle gives a strong warning as the white man is likened to locusts. The oracle said more of them would come, as per his words during the next planting season more white men descended upon the village. These white men waited till the marketplace was full to come and kill everyone present at the market except the old and frail. They destroyed the village just as the Oracle had warned. This enlightens the reader about the cultural history of Africa which is the setting of the text.

2. To what extent does the novel *Things fall Apart* contain idioms and proverbs that solely belong to African society?

In order to answer the second research question, the fifteen chapters are again analyzed in order to see how often idioms and African proverbs are used. The meanings are exploited to see how significant they are in Igbo society. In every society, people have found ways to communicate through different styles and forms of phrasing which enriches the value of what is being said. These include metaphors, parables, riddles, proverbs, idioms, touches of sarcasm, folktales, and many other techniques. This research question will help get a clear reflection of how African societies especially the Igbo use their African proverbs. From the fifteen analyzed chapters, the researcher picks the proverbs that are very meaningful in the African context.

The chosen proverbs are almost used in many parts of the African continent, not just in Umuofia which is the village in the chosen text *Things Fall Apart*.

Below is the table containing the number of African proverbs and idioms the book uses to contextualize and help in understanding the African culture.

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	
CHAPTER 2	He who brings kola brings life 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

As the data in table 3. above illustrates, 8 out of 14 chapters contain African proverbs. The third chapter has more proverbs than the rest of the chapters. From our sample base, this represents a rich presence of the proverbs throughout the book. The use of idioms is another feature that I noted in most of the chapters. Seven (7) of the twenty five (25) chapters do not contain idioms. The use of proverbs is a social mode of communication that has a dominant role in most African societies (Finnegan, 1970). Words are of great value and as such Igbo people are known for what can be described as the beauty of their ability to conversate. They regard it as a unique art to their tradition. According to the novel “among the Igbo the art of conversation is regarded very highly”. This is due to their frequent use of proverbs in their day-to-day conversations. Proverbs are highly placed in African societies because they are the pillar of oral literacy and tradition. Just as classical works are cited in written literature in many Western societies, so proverbs are quoted in conversations and speeches in African societies. From the selected chapters there is a significant number of proverbs and idioms. Most of the Igbo proverbs are used to impart wisdom to others by referring to what had happened before to predict what would happen in future times to come. Penfied & Duru (1988) concluded that not only is the use of proverbs a way of speaking or a tool of communication, but it is also a tool of cognitive and social development introduced at a relatively young age and continued throughout adulthood in many African societies. Below are the significant proverbs identified, followed by their meanings.

Proverbs can be defined as folkloric metaphors. Proverbs are considered a reflection of the life of a particular tribe or culture. Like many other cultures that exist elsewhere, the Igbos believe that proverbs carry a lot of valuable life teachings and are the pillars of a well-organized and functional society. These pillars of culture stand on appropriate role behavior expected of everyone, shared values, ethics, social relations, and rules of etiquette as demonstrated in many parts of the literary text (*Things Fall Apart*) chosen for this study. The proverb’s philosophical definitions make statements about a culture, that is called the rules of a peaceful social order. These rules suggest how members of society are to treat each other and carry themselves. Their use in conversation and speeches not only reminds those present of the continued intervention of the ancestors in the lives of the living but also represents a distinctive way in which cultural knowledge is displayed and acquired.

Throughout the text, it is noted that the ancestor's transition into divine beings and their presence never fades away even if they die. Furthermore, it is the knowledge of the rules of the social order and their application in daily life that most sharply divides children from adults in Igbo society. Children and adults are not viewed the same, female children are not equal to male children. Showing respect and discipline is an obligation to everyone. The children are to respect the elders. The older adults are, the more they are expected to know and apply these rules. The reputation of adults, especially men, in the community lies greatly upon their ability to act as a man should according to *Omenila* (culture), to see that others know these rules and do likewise, and to draw upon a rich repertoire of proverbs to bring the community in line with rules of a peaceful order.

The text sets the tone on the importance of carrying oneself with the utmost respect from the very beginning, in the first chapter (p.8) as Achebe writes:

... "if a child washed his hands he could eat with kings"

This is a popular proverb amongst the Igbo. A proverb is used to show that age is to be respected and respect is to be earned. Okonkwo's bravery in the inter-tribal war won him the accolades of a certified warrior. Even though he was young he had earned the respect of his people even among the elders. The Igbos believe that hard work and achievement are to be celebrated. In the third chapter, respect for greatness is emphasized once again. The Igbo culture teaches that any man that pays respect to the great pave's way for his own greatness. The greatest lesson is to inspire the younger generation to aim for greatness. Okonkwo for all he is achieving is portrayed as an example for the young boys in Umuofia. His attributes include being a great swimmer, he is of big stature, and the muscle veins are visible all over his body. He represents what a male figure should be in Umuofia. Okonkwo being let around the elders is a symbol of trust earned and means the future of Umuofia is safe and in great hands.

Tracing back to the first chapter, the book also introduces another proverb:

... He who brings kola brings life

In Igbo culture, rituals are of great meaning. According to the definition, a ritual is a religious or solemn ceremony consisting of a series of actions performed according to a prescribed order. Rituals are performed for almost every ceremony

that takes place in the community. Celebrations and funerals likewise have their rituals best fit for the occasion. The kola nut is a prestige possession and as such, any man accorded the privilege of breaking the kola is respected. It is also a symbol of great hospitality; a man offered a kola nut feels at home and welcomed into a household. It is given to Unoka who is visiting Okonkwo. As Unoka is about to break the kola nut what he says is very significant to the reader's understanding that the process itself is actually spiritual. He recites what can be considered a prayer. He prays to their ancestors for life and health, and for protection from those who may attempt to bring them harm. Everyone who is present as the kola nut is being broken is supposed to take their own turn as this symbolizes the sharing of everything the ancestors have provided. However, like any other ritual, the outcome of the breaking process is where the spirituality in the whole process lies. The kola nut has got to break into many pieces as this symbolizes plentiful shared blessings.

Proverbs are used to teach about the heavy punishment that may be given if anyone goes against their ancestors. It is important according to the text another proverb that warns every one of the wrath and hardship.

...when a man is at peace with gods and ancestors his harvest will be good

The proverb above is another proverb extracted from the third chapter as Unoka goes to consult his *Chi* after his failure to harvest yam as he had anticipated. Unoka is known to be lazy and is sleeping while others are busy working and planting their fields. In Umuofia the people believe that unfortunate events are because the ancestors are upset due to one's unacceptable behavior. Being lazy is unmanly in Umuofia. As such laziness carries punishment. Ancestors' way of punishing is by not giving the offenders a surplus harvest of their plants. Poor health among them is also considered a curse. Harvesting less is shameful, as a man is only as good as much as he can provide for his family.

As stated earlier in this study, culture was described as what a community agrees on or is considered a cornerstone. In Umuofia once again the importance of working hard is emphasized. The mercy of the ancestors is a reward for hard work. Once more, in chapter three, there is the following proverb:

...Eneke the bird says that since men have learned to shoot without missing, he has learned to fly without perching

Like many other cultures in existence, many lessons lie in the wisdom of knowing the value of property and appreciation of the hard work it takes for one to get what one desires. Among the Igbo, they have a tradition of sharecropping as a food security incentive. This is a way of looking out for each other for continued social harmony. The lesson behind it is anything a man has gotten from another man has to be treated with thoughtfulness as an acknowledgment and a gesture of not taking anything for granted.

Another greatly valuable lesson The *Chi* teaches and demands from everyone is humility amongst the people.

...Those whose palm kernels were cracked for them by a benevolent spirit should not forget to be humble

The proverb is found in Chapter 4 of the text. Luck is granted by the divine as such whoever has been accorded luck by the gods should wisely use it as it should not be a burden on others. In this accord, humility means one has to watch how he responds when elders speak, the names he calls others, the hospitality he offers others, and what he is willing to do for others using his social status. Okonkwo has gained a reputation for being too pompous due to his achievements and as such he is beginning to look down on anyone else. He has gone away from the teachings of the ancestors. He starts to believe that everything he has managed to acquire including fame and possessions has been within his power. Okonkwo does not respect the ancestors and gods as he has on several occasions gone against their teachings. For instance, there is a week of peace where unity and peace should be observed but he goes ahead and beats his wife. This is a testament to his character of not having obedience and humility. Not only that Okonkwo calls a man with no title a “woman”. It is disrespectful to call another man a woman in Igbo culture and as such the elders are upset with Okonkwo. They are convinced Okonkwo has gone astray from culture and his ancestors. Any man who dares to go against his ancestors and gods creates his own curse and his downfall is imminent.

Chapter fifteen (we see another valuable lesson on the social institution of marriage. Marriage is an important attribute in Umuofia.

...Never make an appointment with a man who has just married a new wife

Okonkwo asks why Nweke has taken time to show up after realizing he had

delayed. As Okonkwos inquires more on the reasons for the delay he is told Nweke is a newlywed man who has a conjugal obligation of making sure the marriage has a healthy sexual relationship as this is believed to be a remedy that keeps a marriage going strong. Achebe also wrote in the text that “so long as the bed shakes regularly there is peace at home”. The two proverbs suggest that married couples should have sexual intercourse regularly as they have earned the right and privilege to enjoy the intimacy of married life. Sexual activeness is sometimes considered taboo to be discussed in African society and as such the book does not really contain proverbs that discuss sexual relations explicitly.

The Igbo society expects maturity from everyone and it teaches everyone to never rely on another person. They believe any person goes far and appreciates their journey if they embark on one on their own, Achebe (1958) in the novel *Things Fall Apart* in Chapter 11 writes:

...a baby on its mother’s back does not know the way is long

This proverb is used from as a direct reference to when Enzima is being carried to the Agbala shrine by Chielo on the back. The distance seems to be overwhelming. Enzima does not have to worry about the distance because she is on someone’s back. The long-distance is being covered on her behalf as she is a child. This is what a mother does, she will make sure a child does not suffer as long as she is able to sort out the problem. A child’s well-being solely depends on the mother. The deeper meaning of the proverb, however, is to place emphasis on the need for everyone to confront life’s challenges and hardships on their own as everyone is meant to appreciate what comes along with enduring hardship.

In chapter three, the text expands more on how Igbos interpret a person’s actions whenever something happens. The Igbos say:

...Whenever you see a toad jumping in broad daylight, then know something is after its life

The Igbo believe that the universe has a way of communicating with people when something is about to befall them. All the warning signs are there and it is up to people to listen to what the universe is trying to tell them. Achebe in the text *Things Fall Apart* uses the toad as an example because if a toad is jumping up and down during the day it is probably escaping harm. Okika in the text used this proverb

after he realized that there was a change to his usual day-to-day schedule as he saw that men had gathered instead of working on their compounds as they usually do by that time. He surely can sense that something is about to happen in Umuofia.

The last proverb to be interpreted comes from the first chapter (p.5) from the text:

“Proverbs are the palm oil with which words are eaten”

The proverb above may be considered a summary of why Igbos value proverbs so much. In Igbo culture, palm oil is used for cooking. Food consumption is what keeps human beings alive as such the proverbs are seen as the food that they (Igbos) consume to feed the conversation and keep it going. Okoye says that it is the proverbs that enhance a conversation.

To sum up these findings, in Igbo society, the linguistic nature of the proverb itself has a powerful psychological effect on the addressee and the audience. It represents a mental challenge to the addressee. As one Igbo respondent in Penfield's data noted: "The proverb makes somebody think twice". It has an effect on the other person that literal words may not have. It puts someone in a line of relaxation. sum up the findings on the proverbs, according to the perspective of Igbo society, skill in the appropriate use of proverbs is an indication of one's language, cognitive, and moral development. In the selected ten chapters, it is evident that the community is using proverbs in everyday interactions and as an end product, a new reality is formed or created.

The text also features a substantial number of idioms even though they are not necessarily derived from the African Igbo society. The text uses idioms to paint a mental picture in the reader so as to help get a better understanding. Idioms do not carry one single meaning and it would be misleading to define them by providing one meaning but as noted by Bromley (1984) idioms can be explained as figurative expressions. Some of the idioms found in *Things Fall Apart* include the following:

- An outsider who weeps more than the bereaved
- Crystal of beauty
- Quick as the lightning of Amadiora
- Putting a knife to the things that unite us

- Have not found the mouth with which to tell of their suffering
- Chickens went to the roost
- He was not a hunter
- Three moons ago
- He saw things as black and white
- Stood his ground
- The spell was broken

The above-listed idioms are part of the text’s idioms but as asserted by Cooper (1999) complete mastery of idioms may be near every language learner must be prepared to meet the challenge because idioms occur so frequently in spoken and written English. For L2 learners comprehending idioms as intended by the author of the text may not be as easy, but the idioms help develop a mental image of what is transpiring in the specific scenarios where they are employed.

The figure below shows the frequency between the proverbs and idioms in the randomly chosen fifteen chapters from the text *Things Fall Apart*.

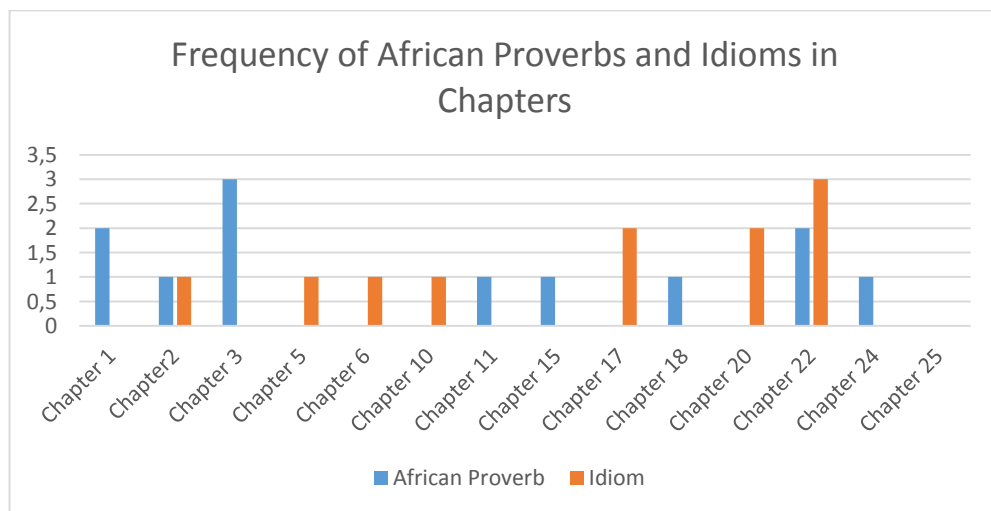


Figure 4. Showing the frequency between proverbs and idioms in the 14 chapters.

3. To what extent are the social structures, roles, and relationships depicted in the novel *Things fall Apart*?

This last research question of the study aims to analyze how the selected text discusses the defined roles of members of society according to their gender as men and women. The other aim is to expand on the social institutions and their meaning

to society. This question tackles the role of culture as a set of beliefs in all of the above-stated interests of the study and its effects on the daily lives of African society. The social hierarchy is another point of interest in this research as this is believed to be connected to culture. Table 3 below shows the roles of each gender and the expectations

Table 4: Social roles and expectations of each gender in African society

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

Hierarchy in African society is accorded threefold; gender, achievement, and age. In that order, everyone's social role is defined and determined. Throughout the novel, *Things Fall Apart* men are given the driving seat in the affairs of the community. From the social perception, Achebe presents the protagonist, Okonkwo as an ultimate example of what is expected of those given the male gender at birth according to the Umuofian culture. Childbirth and gender at birth carry a lot of different meanings in different societies. In the African context, it is clear from the social perception that from childhood more is expected from the male child than from girls. Right in the first chapter, Okonkwo gains a reputation as a warrior at a young age.

“His fame rested on solid personal achievements. As a young man of eighteen, he had brought honor to his village by throwing Amalinze the Cat. Amalinze was a great wrestler who for seven years was unbeaten, from Umuofia to Mbaino. He was called the Cat because his back never touched the earth. It was this man that Okonkwo threw in a fight which the old men agreed was one of the fiercest since the founder of their town engaged a spirit of the wild for seven days and seven nights” (p. 1).

Achebe's use of a male figure (Okonkwo) from the very beginning sets the tone of how valuable male children were to society. They are the ones capable and are given the noble task of bringing honor to their communities. Boys who will eventually turn into men are not expected to be cowards. Okonkwo dared the strongest wrestler. He manages to have the Cats' back touch the earth which is a sign he had been completely defeated. This victory is not only for Okonkwo. It is a victory for the whole of Umuofia. This is also a message for those that may be plotting against the Umuofians. Umuofia was now well protected and able to keep harm far away. Okonkwo in his capacity as a male child has fulfilled his role as society would require him to. Failure and masculinity can never co-exist according to the traditions and values of the Igbo in Umuofia. That is why Unoka is despised in his own son's (Okonkwo) eyes. Okonkwo's passionate hatred for laziness is depicted clearly as the text says

“Inwardly Okonkwo knew that the boys were still too young to understand fully the difficult art of preparing seed yams. But he thought that one could not begin too early. Yam stood for manliness, and he who could feed his family on yams from

one harvest to another was a great man indeed. Okonkwo wanted his son to be a great farmer and a great man. He would stamp out the disquieting signs of laziness that he thought he already saw in him” (p. 31)

According to the novel, in African society every individual is responsible for creating his own luck and prosperity, and as such young boys had to know it was their duty to do so. Unoka is a failure not only to himself but even to his own children also do not hold him in high regard. After so many years does not have anything to show, he is weak and cannot even work his Yams field. His father’s poverty embarrassed Okonkwo greatly. In African society, a man has to make sure he can feed his family at all times. It is what brought dignity. Anyone who does not have dignity is not fit to be called a man.

According to Table 4, male children have a duty to teach the younger boys what manliness is all about. That is the expectation of what their social role details. Ikemefuna comes to live with Okonkwo’s family and assumes the role of an elder brother to Okonkwo’s younger sons, Nwoye in particular. In African customs and traditions, members residing under the same roof consider each other siblings. In order to illustrate this, In the seventh Chapter, Achebe (1958, p. 38) writes:

“He was like an elder brother to Nwoye, and from the very first seemed to have kindled a new fire in the younger boy. He made him feel grown up; they no longer spent the evenings in mothers hut while she cooked, but now sat with Okonkwo in his *obi*, or watched him as he tapped his palm tree for the evening wine. Nothing pleased Nwoye more than to be sent for by his mother or another of his father’s wives to do one of those difficult and masculine tasks in the home, like splitting wood or pounding food.”

Once again this helps the reader understand that even the boys as they attain a certain age, the expectation within the culture is to be given tasks that befit a male child. Being given difficult tasks is a seal of approval that one is now a man. Being around their mothers as they prepare food in the kitchen is unmanly and something to be ashamed of. The development of Nwoye excites Okonkwo and makes him a happier man as he feels he is raising his son the right way.

During the course of the book analysis, I noted that the introduction chapters did not glorify any female on an equal scale as they did men such as Okonkwo. This

paints a clear picture of each gender's place in African society. It is an indication the culture is male-centered. There is the othering of the feminine sex, the female sex is alienated from the activities that are considered crucial. As put by According to Anyokwu (2011), the role distinction that is motivated by the purported sex inferiority of women further complicates the othering of the feminine. In a society that is fundamentally culture-bound and patriarchal, tradition so promotes and engenders psychic suppression of the feminine sex by forcing girls and women to take a backseat in social activities as though that were their natural place in life. The Umuofian culture mandates that once a man marries, he alone has the privilege of being the supreme head of his household, and neither his authority nor his judgments may be questioned. Men are the dominant sex and as such everyone including their wives and children live in absolute fear. In the fifth chapter, the novel details how harsh husbands can get toward their wives over simple incidents. Okonkwo picks an argument with his wife over banana leaves, this is clearly an anger outlet

Without further argument, Okonkwo gave her a sound beating and left her and her only daughter weeping. Neither of the other wives dared to interfere beyond an occasional and tentative, 'It is enough, Okonkwo,' pleaded from a reasonable distance (p. 37)

The men can choose if they feel it necessary to resort to violence to settle scores. Disciplining their wives includes violating them physically. The role of women in society is once more brought to light by looking at their role at functions, which tells a bigger story.

In Chapter 10, we see a gathering that attracts all members of society. Achebe wrote

"It was clear from the way the crowd stood or sat that the ceremony was for men. There were many women, but they looked on from the fringe like outsiders" (p. 83)

In many aspects of social life, women are reduced to spectators. In the setting of the above-mentioned ceremony, women take the back seat and their involvement in anything brings little value and it is as good as not letting them participate. Even in cult activities that are spiritual in nature the women are never allowed to be a part of them. It is written in the novel that the *egwugwu* house, is not a dwelling where

women are welcome. The colored patterns and drawings are done by women but under the strict supervision of men. This exhibits the accepted norm that women are not allowed to do anything on their own. It is prohibited for women to go into the *egwugwu* house. It is not only entry into the house that is restricted to men only, women can never ask questions about the most powerful and most secretive cult of their own land. Culture subdues women into mere belongings of society with no voice nor right to question anything. Submission to men is what is expected from all women. Male supervision and approval mean something can be acceptable to the whole community.

The portrayal of the role of women in society as presented in the novel gives the reader a sense of how social relationships between men and women with regard to the social institution of marriage in the African context are set up. Men are not barred on the number of wives they can marry. Society is openly accepting of polygamy which is a practice western values would desist and regard as unholy. A man is expected to have as many children as possible, women's place in men's life is to help them bear the children. A man who had many wives is a wealthy man. With wealth came dignity and respect from other men and this is very important in the social ladder. Each compound had to have huts according to the number of wives one had. According to the customs the wives are to live in harmony and all of them know their ranking. There is an order in which they exist and the other wives should respect the ones above them. In simpler terms, the wives themselves do not have a problem with the marital arrangement. There is coordination in their relationship among each other as they do some tasks together.

A great exhibition of this can be found in the fifth chapter (p. 27) which says:

“The festival was now only three days away. Okonkwo's wives had scrubbed the walls and the huts with red earth until they reflected light. They had then drawn patterns on them in white, yellow, and dark green. They then set about painting themselves black beautiful black patterns on their stomachs and on their backs. The children were also decorated, especially their hair, which was shaved in beautiful patterns. The three women talked excitedly about the relations who had been invited, and the children reveled in the thought of being spoilt by these visitors from the motherland.”

Achebe (1958) displays unity among the wives as a symbol of their

acceptance of being married to the same man. This is a common tradition and practice for a man to marry more than one wife in West Africa. The tradition however spreads to other parts of Africa. These traditions trait back to ancient times as well showing how tribes were formed and came together to co-exist.

Girls are not equal to boys according to the tradition and customs of African society. The role of young girls and what society expects of them is another interesting feature of culture and how it influences how female children are treated and viewed. Once they become of age anyone interested in marrying the young ladies has to first come to the family and get the blessings of the father. As the female children are brought up, they are taught to grow up into women who obey their husbands.

“We are giving you our daughter today. She will be a good wife to you. She will bear you nine sons like the mother of our town” (p. 111)

As discussed, the primary role young girls have is to wait on a man that will come make them a bride. Not only that, but we also see how a young bride is viewed, praised, and celebrated as a sexual object. Obierika’s son, Maduka goes to ask for a bride accompanied by his father. Due process is conducted. As a way of spicing the event, a band is hired to perform one of the latest songs in the village:

‘If I hold her hand

She says, “Don’t touch!”

If I hold her foot

She says, “Don’t touch!”

But when I hold her waist beads

She pretends not to know.’

The song talks about women’s submission to men sexually. Waist beads are one of the sexual objects related to women’s sexuality. They traditionally signify a young woman’s purity. The waist beads are to be touched and removed by the new husband alone on the first night as a couple. The song encourages the young bride to let her newlywed husband have a satisfying matrimonial privilege. The young lady is being advised not to resist her husband’s sexual needs as it is believed in African society that a man’s sexual desire is like thirst upon which his wife carries the duty

of quenching. The culture stresses the need for this if women are to have successful marriages.

The *Ndichie* or elders also have a role they play in society. Life experience is greatly appreciated in African society as such it is believed it is the elderly who carry wisdom. It is believed wisdom is a gift that comes along with age. The elder's role is to unite the people, to teach the younger generation right from wrong but also to interpret events and their consequences as they happen. Throughout the book, I noticed that the *Ndichie* carry the duty to educate and make sure the established values and tradition that give the Igbo identity continues for generations to come. The elders are consulted every now and then and they could tell what is wrong without asking, that is wisdom in African society.

Okonkwo returns to his mother's clan as punishment for his sin of murder. He is a curse therefore the Ancestors demand he leaves for seven years to live in exile before he can return to his father's land. The *Ndichie* is Uchendu, his mother's only surviving brother who listens to his ordeal. Uchendu mobilizes all his kinsmen to address Okonkwo. He chooses his words carefully and said:

“It is Okonkwo that I primarily wish to speak to,’ he began. ‘But I want all of you to note what I am going to say. I am an old man and you all are children. I know more about the world than any of you. If there is anyone among you who thinks he knows more let him speak up.’” He paused, but no one spoke (p. 125)

Uchendu as an elder feels he is the only one who has the right to speak to Okonkwo to make him understand the situation that has befallen him. Culturally it is his responsibility to do that. He asks Okonkwo questions to which he admits he does not know the answers. This makes Uchendu the elder remind Okonkwo about how in African society anyone younger had to respect what the elders say, as he tells him:

“You do not know the answer? So, you see that you are a child. You may have more wives and children than I have. You are a great man in your clan. But you are still a child, my child. Listen to me and I shall tell you” (p. 125)

Achebe (1958) wants to remind the reader that in African society and culture achievements and possessions did not mean anything before the elders. A man may have more than his elders but that does not place him above them. A child remained a child in front of the elders as wisdom is more valuable than anything could gain

and possess. Although he makes Okonkwo realize his mistakes at the same time, he takes the responsibility of reminding him that he is not the only sufferer in the world. He uses his own experience of facing hardship and not giving up. He finalizes his talk to Okonkwo by telling him

'For whom is it well, for whom is it well?

There is no one for whom it is well.'

C. Summary

Chapter IV discusses the findings and results from the 14 chapters randomly selected in detail, in the Discussion section. A detailed analysis of what is found in the 14 chapters is according to the criteria adopted from Lazar (1993). The research questions are answered accordingly using the data presented in tables 2, table 3 and table 4 independently. The results from each criterion differ as different data is used to respond to the research questions.

V. CONCLUSION

A. Introduction

This chapter's primary objective is to discuss and summarize the research's key findings. The key themes that were covered throughout the earlier chapters are accentuated. This chapter also offers suggestions on what the author establishes should be done in the field of teaching English as a second language for a greater purpose beyond just communication or interaction. In the end, the chapter sets cross-cultural reading in the context to rightly assess the value of using African literary texts for teaching and acquiring English as a Foreign Language.

B. Conclusion

This study mainly focuses on the effectiveness of using African novels 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, the researcher of the study 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 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, the researcher agrees with Lazar's 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 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. is also found an attempt to describe 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. against Achebe 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. It needs to be preferred 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 novels 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 (1958) through his novel 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 novel 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 from non-African writers as has been the case. That has always left out the finer details that are overlooked by the 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 from many other different places. As language teachers our duty goes beyond developing a competent language user, we should aim at developing individuals that appreciate the various factors that influence language.

As language teachers it is needed to develop language users with a complete

understanding of the world as a diverse place where many other cultures, customs and traditions can co-exist and be appreciated for their uniqueness.

C. Suggestions

- More African novels in local African languages should be translated into English to increase readership beyond the communities they originate from.
- Language teachers should themselves develop an interest in diversifying their choice of texts they use in teaching English as Foreign Language as African literary texts have proven to be a source of great untouched cultural content.
- Language teachers should maximize on the benefit of reading authentic material for their language classes as it enhances the level of curiosity and interest from the learners and readers.
- Modern African novels that clearly define the roles of women and female children should be made available to check if there has been meaningful progress on how society views them.
- African literary texts on Africa written by African authors should be given priority when selecting material for teaching language through literature.
- To promote African literature, Africans should translate their literature into other African languages to promote the reading culture within Africa itself.
- African literature should be introduced as an independent separate segment of literature to catch up with other literature that originates from elsewhere.
- Post-colonial African novels to be viewed as a source of teaching English among English teachers as they are mostly viewed as source of ideology beyond teaching language i.e., political ideologies.

D. Recommendations for Future Research

For future research, this study concludes that there is a need for more research on how the field of teaching English as a Foreign Language has been influenced by other African literary forms not just literary texts post the African colonial era.

This study briefly studied the benefits of African literature to enhance cultural awareness through reading English as a Foreign Language (EFL). It is important to check what other benefits beyond cultural awareness can be yielded if other African literary forms are given the priority of being used as frequently as other literary forms from elsewhere have been used in teaching English i.e., English literary texts, Russian literary texts, Western music texts have been used.

Therefore, a further study on how other forms of African novels can be used to highlight why African literature can be used to achieve the goal of teaching English as a Foreign Language anywhere in the world.

E. Summary

Chapter V of the study has proven the hypothesis that African novels enhance cultural awareness amongst its readers to be accurate. This final chapter of the study also carries further suggestions that are provided on what could be done to increase the value and accessibility of Africa literature to more second language learners across the world to encourage cross-cultural reading across the globe.

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