Literature Circles Enhancing Cultural Awareness and Language Acquisition for Adult Learners of Arabic

Hayder Al Hamdany[1a], Michelle Picard[2b]

Abstract

Language and culture are inextricably linked. Consequently, the teaching of cultural awareness as part of additional language instruction is crucial to increasing language proficiency. This paper examines how literature circles are utilized and actively modelled in the teaching and learning of the Arabic language and its culture in an adult Arabic as an Additional Language classroom in Iraq with beginner, intermediate and advanced learners. The impact of the literature circles pedagogy is explored through the analysis of audio transcripts of the interactions during the class, student journals reflections on their experiences participating in the study, and the researcher's field notes recording their observations during the literature circle activities. Eight participants from diverse cultural and linguistic backgrounds were divided into two multi-level groups. The data revealed that the literature circle methodology increased student-to-student interaction and collaborative learning and understanding of Arabic culture. These outcomes resulted in enhanced confidence in using the language and, consequently language proficiency in the Arabic language.

[1] Associate Professor, Email: hayderk.alhamdany@uokufa.edu.iq (Corresponding Author)
Tel: +964-783-1561706
[2] Associate Professor, Email: michelle.picard@murdoch.edu.au
[a] University of Kufa, Iraq
[b] Murdoch University, Australia
http://dx.doi.org/10.22034/ijscl.2022.550377.2578

1. Introduction

The literature on language learning (e.g., Watkins, 2000) suggests that language and culture cannot be separated. Therefore, the ability of non-native speakers to become proficient in an additional language can be impacted negatively by the failure to fully understand the cultures of the native speakers. Mashudi et al. (2022) demonstrate that explicitly teaching culture alongside language has positive outcomes for learners. Hernandez et al. (2021) also confirm the positive impact of knowledge of culture on the attitude towards learning a foreign language. A key study on the teaching of Arabic to Arabic as an Additional Language (AAL) learners (Al-Tamimi, 2012) demonstrates that the teaching of Arabic literature improved both the cultural awareness and the linguistic proficiency of participants. Al-Tamimi (2012) notes that these positive results are because literature provides an authentic immersion in the target language. These findings are also reflected in more recent literature (e.g., Zainal et al., 2022), where the teaching of literature using short stories from the target language's culture was found to be more beneficial as measured by performance in post-tests than those referencing the students' home culture. However, these studies do not provide specific pedagogy on how to introduce literature and target culture to students beyond recommending a careful selection of literary texts that account for the cultural backgrounds and proficiency levels of the students. In this study, we aimed to fill this gap in the literature by selecting literature circles as a pedagogical approach since it is a method that includes social interaction, immersion in the target culture, and critical reflection, all elements described as being useful in enhancing the learning of an additional language. Research on the literature circle methodology is described in more detail in the theoretical framework below.

2. Theoretical Framework

Literature circles are an extremely popular approach in language teaching globally, as demonstrated by the fact the International Reading Association and the National Council of Teachers of English certified literature circles as the most appropriate and effective approach to studying culture and language through classroom teaching-related practices.

Farris et al. (2007) noted that the literature circle fuses cultural literacy with language proficiency, ensuring that students are able to connect classroom lessons to previously acquired knowledge, enabling them to compare their native and additional cultures, and resulting in students being more motivated to study/learn in an additional culture. Farris et al. (2007) also emphasized that the literature circle approach supported student-to-student interaction and socialization. The reason for the positive impact of literature circles is perhaps because, as noted by early scholars (e.g., Carrington & Luke, 1997), people learn and develop language proficiency by mainly interacting with their immediate environment rather than participating in formal educational processes. Moreover, through social interactions, people are able to master the art of defining things and generating meaning. Similar sentiments were shared by Vygotsky (1978), who emphasized the important role social components of learning play in fostering psychological development. On his part, Goodsell (1992) opined that learning occurs not only through our peers but also through our experiences in our social and historical contexts. Generally, our thoughts are mere inferences from the conversations we have had with other people, and it is from these conversations that we are able to gain new knowledge (Hamada & Koda, 2008). Equally, the social justification of any set of knowledge impacts heavily on the meaning that people normally assign to such knowledge (Goodsell, 1992).

In order to achieve social and contextual learning, the literature circle approach draws on both the efferent and aesthetic stances to reading as described in early reading studies by Rosenblatt (1986). The literature circle approach supports knowledge of the target culture through drawing on the information within the text (efferent stance), while it also supports aesthetic reading where the participants reflect on their past experiences with the world around them and are supported to discuss and share these with others (Maloch, 2002). Scaffolding these reflections and interactions is an important characteristic of the literature circle approach (Al Hamdany, 2020), which is particularly important with adult learners since, as Menken, Kleyn, and Chae (2012) suggest, successful teaching of this

cohort relies on the creation of a conducive learning environment where they are able to make real-life inferences and are supported in developing their personal reflections.

These personal reflections are, in common with other adult learning approaches, fostered by encouraging the learners to draw on their knowledge of their own contexts and backgrounds and compare this with the topics and cultural issues addressed in the texts (Orem, 2001). Issues such as sex, religion, ethnicity, and etymological similarities are introduced naturally through a discussion of the literary texts and the historical and social contexts within which they developed, enhancing a sense of cultural mindfulness (Saunders-Brunner, 2004; Schulz, 2008).

There have been a number of ways in which literature circles have been implemented over the past three decades. Some (e.g., Wineburg & Grossman, 1998) have suggested limiting the amount of structure provided by the instructor to ensure genuine collaborative networks where the students can share their personal perspectives and information, while others (e.g., Sanacore, 2013) have suggested that a more structured approach helps to develop critical thinking and the quality of interpersonal interactions. Some scholars (e.g., Ivman et al., 1996) have suggested including the showing of a film in conjunction with written texts and including native speakers in the literature circle to enhance the collaboration and authenticity of the cultural interaction. Literature circles tend to be held synchronously in face-to-face settings; however, more recently, online synchronous circles have become common, often supplemented by mediated asynchronous discussion board activity online (Ivic & Sostaric, 2020). However, all of these approaches have had the following elements in common:

1. Modeling: The use of both non-judgmental and critical thinking language during teaching
2. Listening: Taking note of what the instructor is teaching and making follow-up inquiries where necessary.
3. Encouraging: Fostering the active involvement of students during learning sessions.

4. Challenging: motivating students to become more critical thinkers as far as language learning sessions are concerned.

Besides the elements highlighted above, the following features of the literature circle approach, as explained by Daniels (2006) have become common in adult learning contexts:

1) Temporary multi-level learning groups are formed.
2) The learning groups select their own reading materials and learning topics.
3) A schedule is developed by the group clearly detailing their group learning activities
4) Learners are required to come up with means of self-evaluating themselves to determine the progress they are making in their studies.
5) Personal connections and active participation of all members are expected.
6) An instructor's role in the group is to serve as a mere facilitator.
7) Evaluation can be conducted by both the teacher and the students themselves.
8) A playful and fun-learning approach is adopted.
9) Upon the completion of the reading texts, group members must share with each other.

The literature circle approach draws on the socialization and collaboration between learners of different levels and involves active learning (Carrison & Ernst-Slavit, 2005). Because of this active communication and meaning-making where the learners are largely autonomous within a provided framework, even students with low levels of language and reading proficiency gain greater confidence and mastery of the target language (Imamyartha et al., 2021). Despite the numerous articles on literature circles over the past three decades, most of these have focused on their use in English language teaching or that of other European languages such as French or Spanish. This paper attempts to address the gap in the literature by addressing this issue in the AAL context. To achieve that, we asked the following research question:

What is the impact of literature circles on students' understanding of Arabic culture and language proficiency?

3. Methodology

The research followed a broadly ethnographic approach. Although this study does not follow the classic ethnographic approach of observation of a culture over an extensive period of time, ethnographic tools of observation, access to key stakeholders and the use of field notes have been identified as useful in research on language and cultural acquisition as they enable systematic recording of the evolving sub-culture of the language learning environment and the interactions between the learners' cultures and that of the target language culture (Hornberger, 2020).

The conceptual framework proposed by Daniels (2006) and described in the literature review was adopted in this study, with the underlying objective to examine AAL learners' improvement in Arabic cultural literacy. Nevertheless, our classroom setting necessitated some adaptation of the model. Because of the intensive nature of the course (only ten weeks) and vastly different levels of student proficiency, as suggested by Azmi (2018), we selected the reading texts for the students given that the students had not had sufficient immersion in the cultural environment to select appropriate texts and we needed to ensure that all students could understand the selected texts to a certain text.

3.1. Participants

The research was conducted with two groups of adult learners ranging from beginner to advanced proficiency levels who were taking AAL lessons in an Intensive Arabic Program of 10 weeks within a large university in the central area of Iraq. The program focuses on communicative competency in Modern Standard Arabic (MSA) and aims to prepare students to interact with people within Arabic-speaking societies. The stated objectives of the program are as follows:

➢   Be able to communicate proficiently in writing using different text types and in a range of social and academic contexts.
➢   Master the art of applying suitable pronunciation and intonation.
➢   Be able to make proper speaking responses using a range of key grammatical constructions.
➢   Demonstrate ability to understand and summarize basic texts in Arabic dealing with a range of familiar topics.
➢   Recognize cultural practices relevant to a wide range of social and academic contexts and be able to incorporate the knowledge into language use.

A total of 8 culturally and linguistically diverse participants were selected for this study. The eight students were aged 18 to 36 years and were from 7 different countries: Iran, the United States of America, Norway, Italy, China, Turkey, and Nigeria. The eight selected students were placed into two groups, with each group having four participants of different levels of language proficiency, all of whom were accorded four different roles. There were two female and two male participants in each group. The group membership remained stable over the period of the study to enhance friendship and active collaborative learning, as recommended by Carrison and Ernst-Slavit (2005).

3.2. Instruments

3.2.1. Role Sheets

As pointed out earlier, five different sets of roles were assigned to the students, as highlighted in the table below. As there were five different roles, the first role was rotated between the four group members:

Table 1
Literature Circle Roles and Responsibilities

The person in charge of directing or summarizing the discussion	The person in charge of enriching the vocabulary	The person in charge of enriching literacy	The person in charge of enhancing connections	The person in charge of reflecting authorship

The student who is assigned this role is responsible for motivating students to share/exchange ideas and opinions, kick start group discussions by introducing reading topics, and oversee the flow of discussions.	This role entails providing definitions and introducing the meaning of relatively hard and ambiguous words so that they can be better understood by other students.	The student playing this role should help other members to familiarize themselves with the writing style of the author of the text they are.	For this role, efforts are geared towards enabling students to perceive things from the perspective of the author and hence connect their reading to their own experiences.	For this student, s/he is responsible for assisting other members in reflecting on the possibility of making key alterations to the text they have been reading.

The basic rule guiding the performance of these roles was that each student must stick to the role explicitly assigned to him/her. Nevertheless, there were incidents where certain activities were designed to be jointly undertaken by all members.

3.2.2. Reading Materials

The two texts selected to orientate students were: "The brave soldier" (Appendix 2) (TBS), which narrates the story of an Iraq soldier who captured Islamic State of Iraq and Syria forces and "Tariq Baghdad" (Appendix 1), a comic book about ancient cities of Iraq written by an Italian archeologist. From there, the students are then introduced to two short stories, namely: "The Ideal Mother" (IM), written by Randa Abdulhameed, about an Arabic Muslim mother who takes care of the whole family and the "Arab Stories", particularly its third chapter titled, "In generosity, cheapness, wealth, poverty and hospitality" (GCWPH) and written by Ibrahim Shamsuddin. This text narrates the life and habits of the Arabs before and after the Islamic period.

The last reading material is a children's novel written by Khadija Al-Jabria entitled "Building my Thoughts". In this text, the author provides a succinct description of the rather unusual teaching style a teacher employs to help students to become more critical thinkers.

The texts were selected as they reflected the historical past and recent present of Iraq, as well as a range of text types and levels of formality and idiom in MSA.

3.3. Procedure

Over the ten-week period, each group held a fortnightly meeting lasting on average 45 minutes each. Four hundred fifty minutes of audio recordings were collected. In each meeting, field notes were made as the facilitator/researcher observed the interactions. During the first session for each group, no field notes were taken as the facilitator/researcher took a more active role. After each session, the learners wrote reflective journal entries, and 25 entries were collected.

3.3.1. Data Collection

As highlighted above, data collection consisted of field notes, audio recordings which were transcribed and coded, and reflective journal entries by the participants.

3.3.2. Data Analysis

This study draws upon thematic analysis as a data analysis method as described by Xu and Zammit (2020), as this method allows both a bottom-up and top-down approach toward the identification of themes across a broad set of data – in this case, observations, text from the discussions, and learner-written reflections. In general, this method focuses on looking for patterns of meaning in a data set by identifying similarities and deriving meaning from these similarities in relation to the literature. This method focuses both on meanings within the text-based on words and phrases within the data itself (*in vivo* coding) and grouping ideas across the data together and linking these into single words or phrases based on concepts or ideas from the data or from the literature. We undertook the following steps:

1. Read and re-read the data to make sense of it if already text (as in the case of the learner reflections). The audio data first

required transcription and linking with the field notes.

2. Highlight sections of text and divide them into shorthand labels or 'codes' to describe their content. We focused on a combination of In vivo coding (using learners' own words for coding) and descriptive coding (summarizing extracts using a single word or noun encapsulating the general idea of the data extract).

3. Identify patterns among the codes and group them together into broader 'themes'.

4. Review themes and revise accordingly

5. Define and name each theme succinctly in a way that is easy to understand.

Steps 3 to 5 were iteratively applied as we combined the different data sets and linked the themes with concepts identified in the literature.

3.4. Validity and Reliability

As noted by Northcote (2012), traditional measures of validity and reliability developed for quantitative studies are not necessarily relevant in small-scale qualitative studies. Instead, in this study, we ensured that multiple sources of data were used and that we provided transparency of data analysis through the use of the participants' own words, thus ensuring a rigorous and valid approach as well as using multiple sources of data and auditability to ensure reliable conclusions were reached.

4. Results

Our results indicate the importance of socialization and collaboration as part of the literature circle approach. The approach appeared to enhance the relationships and consequently trust among group members, leading to students supporting each other, gaining enhanced confidence and consequently improved communication skills. These elements are illustrated with selected extracts from the data below.

4.1. Literature Circles Enhancing Relationships and Trust

As noted by Carrison and Ernst-Slavit (2005), the literature circle approach with its clear designation of roles and responsibilities while undertaking a joint endeavor supports positive interpersonal relationships and socialization

among the members of a group. As they discuss their personal experiences that relate to the texts and contrast the situations and contexts of texts to their own, as well as express their feelings in relation to the texts, the group members build their relationship.

One important element of the literature circle approach is that the relationship develops over time, as noted by We'am:

> "*Upon the discussion of the article with other members, then relationship among us improved significantly, with this representing a major milestone considering **we were not used to each other before**. **Nowadays**, we are communicating a lot and quite familiar with each other*".

This aspect was also supported by the field notes, where the facilitator noted in the second and third sessions how the learners appeared increasingly relaxed and laughed and interacted with each other in a friendly manner.

Another important aspect of the relationship is the sense of accountability, as mentioned by Sofia:

> "*Taking part in the literature circle has enabled me to determine that failing to read **will not only impact negatively on my studies but also on those of my fellow group members**. This implies that I am well aware of the fact that I have an obligation to other students...*".

4.2. Literature Circles Helping Students Support Each Other

Through the taking on of designated roles, the learners develop greater confidence not only in discussion, but also in assisting others. As one of the learners, Sofia stated in her reflective journal:

> "The approach adopted for this discussion is indeed beneficial to us because each student has a role, and we are allowed to change roles at times. Moreover, I am happy that we keep on sharing opinions and ideas, with this proving pivotal in enhancing our reading habits".

Tala also reflects this increased confidence in her reflective journal through the taking on specific roles:

"I tend to have a liking of being the director or summarizer of the discussion because I believe that this role will make it possible for me to assist other students in expressing their opinions better. I would particularly preach patience, in terms of giving students time to express their views and opinions".

As well as enhancing the confidence and skills of students who take on leadership roles, literature circles also assist students with lower initial levels of proficiency in attempting more difficult tasks with the help of others than they would on their own. This is what Vygotsky (1978) calls the Zone of Proximal Development (ZPD). The discussion between Khada and Wea'am in one of the fortnightly meetings of their group reflects the ZPD:

"Khada: My question to you is on page 21 of the text, the author refers to a particular city with specifically mentioning whether that city is Babylon or his native city. Do you have an idea of the city the author is talking about in the second paragraph?

Wea'am: if you read that part correctly, he is either referring to Babylon or Sumer. However, upon further reading, you discover that the city he is talking about has law codes, so definitely it is Babylon."

The ZPD enhancement of knowledge and skills through interaction with others is facilitated through the literature circle approach when key social issues (such as family, childhood, fellowship, gender and death) are addressed in the literature circle texts. When the students undertake the scaffolded literature circle activities, they are able to connect their individual experiences with those in the texts (Schulz, 2008). This is exemplified in the following discussion, which occurred in a literature circle around the story of the AM tribe. The group was discussing the fact that the Sheikh in the story had invited foreigners to his Mudief (big launch) and started talking to them about the night of Isra and Al-Mi'raj. One of the characters invited by Sheikh, whose name was David, explained the perceived meaning of God taking the Prophet Mohammed to heaven, and then his interpretation was confirmed by the Sheikh in the story.

"Eyad: In this story, my favorite paragraph, page 18

Tala: Eyad?

Eyad: Wea'am: ...

Eyad: Sofia:

Tala: Sofia:

Eyad: What David has said about the difficult moment the Prophet was in when the Al-Isra' wal-Mi'raj occurred is indeed true. What's your perspective about this issue Tala?

Tala: I agree with the Sheikh and if I was a teacher myself, I would employ a similar approach of teaching this topic.

Eyad: I would also like to know what Wilson thinks about the same topic.

Wilson: As a teacher, I would refrain from being open about this matter, considering it might be difficult to gauge how religious people are at first glance.

Eyad: what's your take on this matter Sofia?

Sofia: I concur with the assessment that the Prophet experienced a lot of hardship when this event was happening and that from a personal point of view, I am convinced that the entire experience shows that something good tends to come from even the hardship moment that we find ourselves in.

Eyad: I commend you all for participating in today's discussion and the wonderful insight you have all provided regarding the same".

Under the guidance of the discussion director (Eyad), the students were guided to provide their views on the topic and increasingly made use of more sophisticated language with greater confidence.

4.3. Literature Circles Improving the Communication Skills of Students

The enhanced communication due to participation in literature circles was endorsed by the learners in their reflective journals. This is best represented by Sofia's observation that:

*"being a member of the group **has really helped me to become better at communicating with my friends in Arabic**. I can now confidently assert that I can now*

speak better and express myself in a far much comfortable way".

Although the facilitator observed that one of the learners, Eyad, an Italian student tended to keep to himself, as can be seen in the section above, when he took on the discussion director role, he interacted with the other students. He himself highlights the benefit of using literature circle as a tool for enhancing students' communication skills in his reflective journal:

"I have previously struggled to air my views to other students. However, being part of the literature circle has boosted my self-esteem, hence ensuring that I become better at discussions. I can't think of a better mode of improving one's communication and discussion skills than literature circles".

4.4. Literature Circles Enhancing Critical and Cultural Literacy in Arabic

As noted in the literature review, literature circles move beyond just understanding the content of a text and also lead to an aesthetic understanding of the text, which includes linking it with their feelings and beliefs. The learners in this study also suggested that this element also enhanced critical thinking and cultural literacy in Arabic.

Reflecting on the plot and its significance, as well as the writing style in a structured function, helps to facilitate critical thinking skills in AAL, as reflected in this discussion group interchange around the story of the Ideal Mother.

Tala: "My question is what meaning is the writer trying to pass out when he says "she (the mother) helps the whole family in their work"? I am asking this because the writer says that she is the only person who shows help to the other. Does the author's aim suggest that she stays at home to look after the family, all the family members? And does that mean she doesn't have any other work to do outside? Do you know why? What can you conclude? Did you ever have a similar experience? Who was the most important character? What is that character's motive?"

Sofia: "I think she is saying this because she is just a house-duty mother. However, it

might be that sometimes the mother feels that she is the core of the house as being described. For instance, going to the party and then discovering that the mother of our Arabic friend was giving all directions and she was the one who made everything, including the food. I can conclude that the mother was the main character in this story".

The value of literature circles in scaffolding critical thinking was also highlighted by several participants in their reflective journal entries. For example, Sofia noted that [she] was "*now able to read and think at the same time, something I was not used to before*" (Sofia). While Khada noted, "*Participating in these roles created a concrete platform for us to better reflect on the story and its characters*" (Khada). In another of her posts, Sofia put it even more explicitly, noting:

"I have to become a critical thinker. My perspective of learning and reading has improved significantly and I am now capable of utilizing personal examples while discussing important topics".

Studying literature in general and following the literature circle approach, in particular, supports a greater understanding of the Arabic culture which also results in greater linguistic proficiency (Al-Tamimi, 2012; Azmi, 2018). This was demonstrated in our study data, particularly around an assignment where students were encouraged to prepare a report highlighting the differences between their culture and the target culture. They could compile the report in their own language or in Arabic. To scaffold this activity around the "Arab Stories", the students were supported in a discussion revolving around the habits, anecdotes, and senses of humor of the Arabs before and after the Islamic period. For example, the learners discussed the practice of pouring coffee to guests, which existed in the early period and remained a common practice in a number of Arabic countries, as reflected in this extract from one of the group's discussions:

"Khada: Does this cultural habit of hosts pouring coffee in the cups of their guests exist in your country:

Sofia: No, this habit isn't practiced in my country, even though the practice of offering

coffee to guests is quite common. Even the shape of the cup that we have noticed in the photo of the story is totally different from the one we have.

Khada: Do they behave in the same way with foreigners?

Sofia: In Norway, it is quite different. For instance, in my country guests are at liberty to choose whether they would like to be served tea, coffee, or even juice. This Italian cultural attribute might be completely lacking in a country such as Iraq, where a guest might not be given accorded such privilege. Consider another example of China where even though offering coffee to quests might not be common, there are still plenty of cultural clues highlighting how people ought to deal with each other. Even in eating, we do have many things that I can clearly see that are quite different from here. It is for this reason that I say no, we don't have these procedures in my country.

Khada: Does this mean that in your country, coffee and food are offered in a different manner?

Sophia: Both.

Khada: Really?

Sophia: Yes."

This exploration of Arabic culture guided by Khada in the role of directing the discussion resulted in Sophia producing significant chunks of language. Comparing the Arabic culture with her own culture thus facilitated greater cultural and linguistic understanding.

5. Discussion

Our study showed that the literature circle method provides additional benefits to AAL learning beyond the benefits of studying a language through the rich tapestry of its culture in common with the studies in the literature review (e.g., Al-Tamimi, 2012; Hernandez et al., 2021; Zainal et al., 2022). Also, in common with the literature (e.g., Goodsell, 1992; Maloch, 2002), this study revealed that the literature circle approach enhanced student-to-student interaction as the learners took on different roles that helped to increase their own

confidence as well as scaffolding learning for other learners in the group. The use of a variety of text types that exemplified the cultural and linguistic features of the language as well as the structured learning approach enhanced the learners' understanding of Arabic culture, and this in turn also increased confidence in using the language and, consequently, language proficiency in Arabic. Irrespective of restricted language proficiency levels, the linguistically and culturally diverse learners were able to read and discuss the target-language literature using an expanded vocabulary with increasing fluency. Perhaps this is because the interactive nature of the literature circle methodology and its drawing on the rich cultural tapestry of the Iraqi culture evoked the learners' senses and emotions and, as noted by Pishghadam et al. (2016, p. 11), "deeper than language, senses can relativize cognition".

Although this was a small-scale study, the results suggest that literature circle is a promising approach to enhancing knowledge of culture and linguistic proficiency. Future larger-scale studies in the AAL context could further enhance the pedagogy as well as explore other modifications to the approach, such as blended learning and the inclusion of film as has been trialed in other language teaching contexts.

References

Al Hamdany, H. (2020). Scaffolding English and academic skills for Iraqi English as additional language (EAL) learners. *Journal of Asia TEFL, 17*(3), 1028-1038.

Al-Tamimi, H. (2012). Teaching literature to foreign language learners: A medium to bridge the gap between cultures. *Scientific & Academic Publishing, 2*(7), 296-305.

Azmi, M. N. B. L. (2018). Developing soft skills using 'literature circles'. *MOJES: Malaysian Online Journal of Educational Sciences*, *1*(2), 8-16.

Carrington, V., & Luke, A. (1997). Literacy and Bourdieu's sociological theory: A reframing. *Journal of Language and Education, 11,* 96-112.

Carrison, C., & Ernst-Slavit, G. (2005). From silence to a whisper to active participation: Using literature circles with ELL students. *Reading Horizons: A Journal of*

Literacy and Language Arts, *46*(2), 93-103.

Daniels, H. (2006). What's the next big thing with literature circles. *Voices from the Middle*, *13*(4), 10-15.

Farris, P., Nelson, P., & L'Allier, S. (2007). Using literature circles with English language learners at the middle level. *Middle School Journal*, *38*(4), 38-42.

Goodsell, A. (1992). *Collaborative learning: A sourcebook for higher education.* The Pennsylvania State University.

Hamada, M., & Koda, K. (2008). Influence of first language orthographic experience on second language decoding and word learning. *Language learning*, *58*(1), 1-31.

Hernandez, M. R., Garay-Argandoña, R., Alberto Núñez Lira, L., Fuster-Guillén, D., Paola Palacios Garay, J., Ocaña-Fernandez, Y. (2021). Investigating instructors' and students' attitudes towards the effectiveness of having target cultural knowledge on learning English as a foreign language. *International Journal of Society, Culture & Language*, *9*(3), 64-72.

Hornberger, N. (2020). Reflect, revisit, reimagine: Ethnography of language policy and planning. *Annual Review of Applied Linguistics*, *40*, 119-127. doi:10.1017/S026719052000001X.

Imamyartha, D., Wahjuningsih, E., Puspa, A., Mitasari, Fitriyah, S. M., Hudori, R. F. A., Andayani, R., Tasnim, Z., Fardhani, A. E., Sundari, S., & Wijaputra, B. A. (2021). Employing blended literature circles to foster activating academic emotions of struggling readers. *IRJE*: *Indonesian Research Journal in Education, 5*(1), 293-310. https://doi.org/10.22437/irje.v5i1.9855

Ivic, V., & Sostaric, B. (2020). Benefits and drawbacks on literature circles in Moodle chat for the students of English as a foreign language. *ALAR: Action Learning and Action Research Journal, 26*(1), 133–158.

Maloch, B. (2002). Scaffolding student talk: One teacher's role in literature discussion groups. *Reading Research Quarterly*, *37*(1), 94-112.

Mashudi, M., Nurmansyah, A., Saenko, N., Nurjamin, A., & Sharifullina, S. (2022). The impact of English cultural awareness on Indonesian advanced EFL learners' grammar knowledge. *International Journal of Society, Culture & Language, 10*(1), 99-108. doi:10.22034/ijscl.2021.246709.

Menken, K., Kleyn, T., & Chae, N. (2012). Spotlight on "long-term English language learners": Characteristics and prior schooling experiences of an invisible population. *International Multilingual Research Journal*, *6*(2), 121-142.

Orem, R. A. (2001). Journal writing in adult ESL: Improving practice through reflective writing. *New Directions for Adult and Continuing Education*, *2001*(90), 69-78.

Northcote, M. (2012, April). Selecting criteria to evaluate qualitative research. In M. Kiley (Ed.), *Narratives of transition: Perspectives of research leaders, educators and postgraduates* (pp. 99-110). The Centre for Higher Education, Learning and Teaching.

Pishghadam, R., Jajarmi, H., & Shayesteh, S. (2016). Conceptualizing sensory relativism in light of emotioncy: A movement beyond linguistic relativism. *International Journal of Society, Culture & Language, 4*(2), 11-21.

Rosenblatt, L. M. (1986). *The literary transaction.* In P. Demers (Ed.), *The creating word* (pp. 66-85). Palgrave Macmillan.

Saunders-Brunner, M. (2004). Literature circles. *School Library Media Activities Monthly, 20*(7), 39-43.

Sanacore, J. (2013). "Slow down, you move too fast": Literature circles as reflective practice. *The Clearing House: A Journal of Educational Strategies, Issues and Ideas*, *86*(3), 116-120.

Schulz, R. A. (2008). The challenge of assessing cultural understanding in the context of foreign language instruction. *Foreign Language Annals*, *40*(1), 9-26.

Vygotsky, L. S. (1978). *Mind in society.* Harvard University Press.

Watkins, D. (2000). Learning and teaching: A cross-cultural perspective. *School Leadership & Management*, *20*(2), 161-173.

Wineburg, S., & Grossman, P. (1998). Creating a community of learners among high

school teachers. *Phi Delta Kappan*, *79*(5), 350-353.

Xu, W., & Zammit, K. (2020). Applying thematic analysis to education: A hybrid approach to interpreting data in practitioner research. *International Journal of Qualitative Methods*, *19*, 1-9. https://doi.org/10.1177/1609406920918810s

Zainal, A., Risnawaty, R., Hassan, I., Rt. Bai, R., Febriani Sya, M. (2022). The comparative effect of using original short stories and local short stories as two types of cultural sources on Indonesian EFL learners' reading comprehension. *International Journal of Society, Culture & Language, 10*(1), 143-152. doi:10.22034/ijscl.2021.247370

Stories Links:

https://www.thaqfya.com/subject-expression-ideal-mother-elements/
http://waqfeya.com/book.php?bid=1117
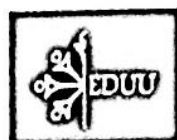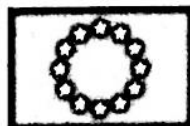http://rawwa2010com.blogspot.com/2017/01/blog-post.html

Appendix 1

(إدو) هو مشروع دولي أمده 30 شهرا (2017-2019) وممول من قبل الاتحاد الأوروبي تحت اطار المساعدات الاوروبية- منظمات المجتمع المدني- برامج السلطات المحلية في العراق. يهدف المشروع الى إنشاء شراكة عراقية- اوروبية في مجال التعليم وتشجيع التراث الثقافي، فضلا عن ربط الجامعات والمدارس والمتاحف فيما بينها. هذه الشراكة ستعمل سوية" على تشجيع التعددية في المجتمع المدني العراقي وعلى رفع الوعي بماضي العراق المتنوع الثقافات.

EDUU is a 30-months (2017-2019) international project funded by the Europen Union in the frame of the EuropeAid - Civil Society Organisations - Local Authorities Programme in Iraq. The project seeks to create an EU-Iraq partnership in the area of education and cultural heritage enhancement, connecting Universities, schools and museums. This partnership will work together with the aim of enhancing the pluralism of Iraqi civil society, raising awareness on the diverse and multicultural past of Iraq.

This project is funded by the European Union

www.eduu.unibo.lt

ALMA MATER STUDIORUM
UNIVERSITÀ DI BOLOGNA

CENTRO RICERCHE ARCHEOLOGICHE e SCAVI TORINO

*This publication has been produced with the assistance of the European Union. The contents of this publication are the sole responsibility of the implementing partners of EDUU project and can in no way be taken to reflect the views of the European Union.

طَريق بَغدَاد

TARIQ BAGHDAD

اَلحُلم

-JMX Comics-

طَريق بَغدَاد

TARIQ BAGHDAD

علم الآثار

JMX Comics

Appendix 2