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Abilities and Cultural Understanding through Literature in the EFL Classroom
- A Literature Review

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Abstract

The English language can be seen as a lingua franca of contemporary times. Its spread and use in the globalized world has affected most levels of society and it can be argued that, in current times, English is synonymous with communication. This need for communication has shaped the English as a Foreign Language (EFL) syllabus, which is evident in the Swedish national steering documents for the educational system. For the upper secondary school these documents show an emphasis on communication, on cultural understanding, and also on the use of literature within the EFL classroom.

The need to possess communicative abilities and cultural understanding, in connection with the use of literature, has sparked an interest to investigate if and how literature itself can be used as a tool to develop and improve EFL students’ communicative skills and cultural understanding.

This literature review thesis analyzes five international research articles from different geographical parts of the Globe. The findings are categorized, compared, synthesized, and finally discussed in order to answer the research questions asked, and also compared with the English subject syllabus for the Swedish upper secondary school.

The findings indicate that the analyzed articles share a consensus, to a varied degree, regarding the positive aspects of literature use in the EFL setting. The arguments are that communicative skills and cultural understanding are intertwined - enabling each other to exist, develop, and improve. One cannot exist fully without the other, and literature is a good tool to use to develop and improve these abilities. Literature can help develop all skills needed to acquire and produce both written and spoken English, and it also enables cultural understanding and a broadening of the mind. Where the articles differ somewhat is in the ideas of why literature is a good tool, how to implement literature in the classrooms, and what some of the negative aspects might be.

The thesis also brings the lack of Swedish studies within EFL to the readers’ attention, as well as the need to do more research focusing on the students’ perspectives towards literature use in the EFL setting.

Key words: Literature, communicative abilities, communicative skills, cultural understanding, EFL.
1. Introduction

In our society it is near impossible to turn on a radio, switch on a television set, or use internet on any technical device, without encountering the English language. Therefore it is arguable that it is important to possess good English language skills in order to fully participate both in national and international societies. This observation, that the English language is ever present in our lives, is also discussed in the “English Subject Syllabus” (Skolverket 2011b) for the Swedish upper secondary school. The opening lines of this document states that:

The English language surrounds us in our daily lives and is used in such diverse areas as politics, education and economics. Knowledge of English increases the individual's opportunities to participate in different social and cultural contexts, as well as in global studies and working life. Knowledge of English can also provide new perspectives on the surrounding world, enhanced opportunities to create contacts, and greater understanding of different ways of living (p.1).

Literature, culture and communication are areas within the subject of English which have been of personal interest for a long time, since I strongly believe that they can enrich one’s life and broaden one’s horizon. As well as my own interest, there is an emphasis within the Swedish school system to teach the students cultural understanding and empathy for others (Skolverket 2011a, p.4-10).

As stated above, there is a focus on empathy, democratic values, cultural understanding, international relations, and communication throughout the national curriculum for the Swedish upper secondary school. When looking specifically at the English subject syllabus, this becomes clear as well, especially the aspects of literature, cultural understanding and communication. Communication is one of the core contents in the English subject syllabus for the Swedish upper secondary school, and the documents state that the students need to be taught the:

Living conditions, attitudes, values and traditions, as well as social, political and cultural conditions in different contexts and parts of the world where English is used. The spread of English and its position in the world [as well as] Content and form in different kinds of fiction” (Skolverket 2011b, p.3).
As well as the quote above, the text also states that “Students should […] develop all-round communicative skills. These skills cover both reception […] and production and interaction (2011b, p.1).

It can be argued that written texts dominate within the classroom setting (Lundahl 2009, p. 48), and although reading is one of the core abilities taught at school, understanding the material can be difficult (Magnusson 2008, p.43). Lundahl (2009) argues that since language is often taught through different types of literature (such as course textbooks, and novels), these difficulties concerning the textual understanding, is carried through into the EFL classroom (p.48-49). If the student is unable to fully comprehend the text, the student is also unable to acquire the intended knowledge from it.

Despite these potential comprehension-difficulties Lundahl’s (2009) point of view is that narratives through literature have a given place within the classroom, and he validates this by quoting Hardy (1977, p.12f):” […] we dream in narrative, daydream in narrative, remember, anticipate, hope , despair, believe, doubt, plan, revise, criticize, construct, gossip, learn, hate, and love in narrative” (p.325). To further stress his point of view, Lundahl (2009) gives some more concrete examples of why it is important to read literature, namely that it gives “a possibility to understand other cultures […], demonstrates language structure possibilities […], produces meaning, and enables language acquisition” (p.326-327).

Despite the positive aspects of literature, both Magnusson (2008) and Lundahl (2009) agree that it can be difficult for students to understand a specific text. When these difficulties occur, previous cultural knowledge and understanding help in the decoding process of making the text understandable (Magnusson 2008, p.45, Tornberg 2009, p.98-103). Having the knowledge that cultural awareness affects the understanding of the written word also correlates with what Mekheimer writes in his paper Impact of the Target Culture on Foreign Language Learning (in Cross-cultural communication, Vol.7, No. 1, 2011). He states that “Teaching language without teaching its culture is quite impossible” (p.45). Svartvik (2004) has similar ideas; he writes that cultural knowledge and competence is an active part of our communicative competence. In order to take part

1 Translated by the author.
in the global society we need to learn more than just the grammatical rules; what is needed is knowledge of social and cultural codes existing in the different English speaking societies we want to communicate with (p.256).

These statements above, about the need for cultural understanding in order to communicate on a satisfactory level, seem to correlate and be in line with the view of those in charge of constructing the current guidelines for the English subject syllabus, in the Swedish upper secondary school. In *Upper Secondary School 2011* by Skolverket (2011c), it is stated that “Development of knowledge and language goes hand-in-hand” (p.15). Furthermore, according to Skolverket (2011a), one of the goals needed to be achieved by the students after their education, is that they “can use non-fiction, fiction and other forms of culture as a source of knowledge, insight and pleasure” (p.8). This emphasis on culture, cultural understanding, empathy for others and so on, are reoccurring themes in all three of the state documents (Skolverket 2011 a, b, and c) used in this essay.

### 1.1 Aim

Within the human sciences there is a general understanding that it is good to avoid “if”-questions, since these tend to facilitate yes and no answers. However in this thesis the “if” will be included, since there is an interest to see whether there is a different view between the research articles regarding literature and its abilities to work as a didactic tool. The “if” will then be followed by the “why” and “how”. This said, the aim of this thesis is to conduct a review of what current research says about if, why and how literature can be used within the English as a Foreign Language (EFL) classroom to enhance students’ communicative abilities and cultural understanding of the target countries. The following research questions are used to achieve this aim:

- Can literature be used to develop and improve communicative abilities within the EFL setting? If yes – why and how?

- Can literature be used to develop and improve cultural understanding within the EFL setting? If yes – why and how?
What are the challenges when using literature to develop and improve students’ communicative abilities and cultural understanding within the EFL setting? How can they be minimized?

Which perspective comes through in the reviewed research; teacher, student, or both?

Definitions of concepts and terms used in the thesis can be found in section: 2.5 Terminology.

2. Background
When focusing on English literature and how it can be used as a learning tool to enhance students’ communicative skills and cultural awareness in the EFL context, it is valid to first investigate more about the language: Its development as a lingua franca, and its development as a school subject in Sweden.

2.1 Why is English a global language?
In order to discuss the research questions, especially regarding possible challenges when using literature within the EFL setting, it is valid to first establish why English is a global language. According to Svartvik (2004) and Crystal (2003), the answers to this lie in the economic, political and cultural circumstances, rather than in the linguistic aspects of the language. Simply put: The English language was at the right place at the right time.

Two main reasons given to explain the English language domination are the development of the British Empire followed by the political, economic, military, technical and scientific domination of the USA, especially during the last fifty years (Svartvik 2004, p.13, p.362-365). According to Svartvik (2004) the English language has become associated with technical innovation. These innovations, and people’s approach and attitude towards them, have in turn affected all levels of society; culture, media, transport, and communication (nationally and internationally) (p.13, p.362-365).

When the colonisers, both British and others, fought over land to be colonised, they drew up maps disregarding the ethnic groups of people living there. This resulted in colonies consisting of many different ethnic groups and language variations. When the colonisers withdrew, they left countries in turmoil due to these ethnic differences (Crystal
The least problematic way to solve the language differences within the former colonies was to continue to use the colonisers’ language as a stabilising factor – within the justice system, within the politics, in education, infrastructure and so on. This is what is called an official second language, and many countries in Africa and Asia, as well as in India, have this arrangement (Crystal 2003, p.39-42; Lundahl 2009, p.72). This is why Svartvik (2004) argues that the English language has a capacity to serve as a neutral communicational platform - a neutral language zone - between rivalling ethnic groups (p.13, 227-229).

According to Svartvik (2004) there is an international discourse concerning the English language which continues to strengthen its position as a lingua franca. It is seen as a language belonging to “the strong”, and by acquiring proficiency in it the chances to succeed economically, politically and/or socially and culturally are increased. Hence the globalisation of the language itself also enables the socioeconomic, electronic, and cultural globalisation – which in turn creates a continued demand for a globalised language (p.13, 227-229.)

2.2 English as a subject in Swedish schools
Since the 1700s there has been a change in foreign language use in Sweden – both regarding the socio-economic status of the language user, the favourite foreign language to learn, and the attitude to why the language should be acquired (Bernhardsson 2011, p.259-260, 268-269). The shift in language focus runs parallel with the shift in the socio-economic status of the users: Up until the 1900s the focus lay on classical languages such as Greek and Latin, but around this time focus starts to shift towards modern languages instead (French, German, and English). However, at this time it is still mostly members of the rich upper-class that learn the languages (Bernhardsson 2011 p.259-260, 268-269; Tornberg 2009, p.34-36).

During the 1900s another shift occurs within foreign language learning; moving away from including all modern languages to primarily focus on English. Parallel to this language-use development, there is a change within the Swedish school system, with the implementation of public schooling as we know it today. This new school enables language education, which used to be a privilege for the rich upper-class, to become something available to all socio-economic levels in society (Bernhardsson 2011, p.267).
According to Bernhardsson (2011) one of the main influences making English the number one foreign language in Sweden is the shift in focus to why a foreign language needs to be learnt. With the classical languages the idea is that grammar is most important when learning a language (p.168; Tornberg 2009, p. 34-36): Through knowledge of grammar, keys are given to open doors to other languages as well. However this view changes during the mid 1900s. From this time onwards the reason for acquiring a foreign language (English in particular) is in order to be able to communicate, and foreign language skills are looked at as being useful and practical abilities to possess (Bernhardsson 2011, p.165). Axelsson’s (2005) point of view is that two outer reasons for this change in discourse are the drastic “increase of international work-related mobility and extensive global tourism” (p.133).²

As well as agreeing with Bernhardsson’s statements, Axelsson (2005) also writes that some events enabling the discourse change, at an organisational level, are new course literature and a restructuring of the teacher education (p. 68-71, 73-75).

Both agree that English becomes associated with democratic values, since it is determined that everybody in Swedish society has a right to acquire a foreign language – not only the rich and privilaged. Since English is most common in media, this is the most useful language to acquire (Axelsson 2005, p.96-98; Bernhardsson 2005, p.165). They also agree on the importance of the year 1962, since this is the year it is decided that the English subject should start being taught in fourth grade (Axelsson 2005, p.133-135; Bernhardsson 2011, p.168).

As stated above the language use has changed over the years, and Axelsson (2005) argues that the Swedish upper secondary classroom situation also mirrors this situation. One of the differences he points out is the capacity of the teacher. He writes that in current times most teachers possess skills in both didactics, methods and subject knowledge, but historically teachers tended to have one skill or the other. Since the English language plays such a big part in our lives, the students’ pre-classroom language skills have changed as well. There is also a shift in the type of English taught: it used to be only British English allowed in the classroom, but now other varieties of English (such as American or Australian) is allowed and taught as well (p.93-97).

² Translated by the author.
It can be argued that what the English language does above all else is to facilitate communicative abilities, regardless of whether the communication takes place in social, cultural, industrial, and/or economical settings. This can explain why the Swedish state documents regarding the EFL curriculum in the upper secondary school place such importance on developing and enhancing students’ communicative competence.

2.3 A short history of literature use in EFL

The development and change within the EFL classroom over the years - both nationally and internationally - are mirrored in the use of literature as a didactic tool within the same setting. According to Bobkina and Dominguez (2014) literature was a “key element” (p.249) during the grammar-oriented period of language learning, due to its exemplification of authentic grammatical and vocabulary use. When focus shifted away from grammatical skills towards the importance of communicative abilities, literature was deemed not useful in the EFL classroom (p.249).

After being ignored as a useful tool to enable language teaching and learning for several decades, literature experiences a small revival during the 1960s. However it is from the mid 1980s and onwards that research into the importance and possibilities using literature as a tool within the EFL setting - and the discourse - truly starts changing (p.249). Although there are still many sceptics, literature starts to somewhat reclaim its importance as “a means for language learning” (p. 249) during this time. This can be said to take place parallel to the emergence of the cultural focus within EFL. With this new focus, the emerging idea is that “literature is language in use and can therefore be exploited for language learning purposes” (p.249). According to Bobkina and Dominguez (2014) literature might be “one of the best ways to understand culture and traditions of the target language, especially in those cases in which a visit or a stay is virtually impossible” (p.251).

2.4 Theoretical perspective

The theoretical perspective for this thesis is based on Vygotsky’s socio-cultural theory with its “Zone of Proximal Development” (ZPD) (Lundahl 2009, p.160). The ZPD is used to describe the process where we acquire knowledge and learning in relation to, and together with, others. Tornberg (2009) writes that “before the learning is cultivated into
internal knowledge, the idea behind socio-cultural theory is that the learning process is viewed as something social; it is a dynamic and interactive process” (p.15). ³ This concept has widespread recognition, since “students working together in groups tend to solve more difficult problems, and develop further, than they would if working alone” (Tornberg 2009, p.15).⁴

2.5 Terminology
Concepts and terms such as communication, culture and literature can be subjective, but by giving a short description of the concepts - as they are being understood and used in this essay - there should be some clarity given to the reader.

2.5.1 Communicative abilities and communicative skills
The terms communicative abilities and communicative skills will be used throughout this thesis. Although it can be argued that they evoke different connotations - where abilities are more of a quality, and skills are more of a “hands-on tool-kit” to enable the abilities - they will mean the same in this thesis. The reason for this is both that, although there is a possible difference in connotation, the meanings of the terms also intertwine, and that abilities and skills are treated as similar in the research found.

2.5.2 Communicative competence
Whether a person communicates really well, or just enough to be understood, there is a transaction of understanding occurring in the process. This transaction of understanding is how Tornberg (2009) describes communicative competence. When giving a definition of the concept she writes that it is “the capacity to understand and to be understood in a foreign language” (p.224).⁵

She continues by stating that this competence is a kind of umbrella which includes other competencies such as “linguistic competence, pragmatic competence, strategic competence as well as having the competence and ability to understand the socio-cultural aspects influencing the target language” (Tornberg 2009, p.224-225).⁶ This definition is

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³ Translated by the author.
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similar to that of Chapman’s (2013), who writes that communicative competence most often “includes grammatical, lexical and phonological knowledge as well as understanding of cultural norms and the ability to use appropriate strategies in communication” (p.1).

When thinking of communication, it is easy to only focus on the oral kind: where we speak and in turn listen. However communication also takes place when reading and writing. Examples of this are written correspondence (such as Facebook postings, tweets, text messages, emails or in adult life; work-related memo’s), information given within newspapers, or shared thoughts and ideas within literary works. Therefore it can be argued that all four areas of language proficiency (reading, writing, listening, speaking) need to be developed in order to enable communication.

2.5.3 Culture
In the introduction to Multiculturalism and Education (2015), Race discusses the definition of culture as given by Parekh (2000, p.2-3). He writes that “culture is, ‘... a body of beliefs and practices in terms of which a group of people understand themselves and the world they organize their individual and collective lives around’” (Race 2015, p.2). He continues by stating that because of this definition there is no way to escape culture, since it is ingrained in our very existence (p.2). This definition is used in this thesis as well.

2.5.4 Multiculturalism
When defining multiculturalism, Race (2015) continues to refer to Parekh (2000, p.3) pointing out that “multiculturalism is about cultural diversity or culturally embedded differences [...] celebration of difference in contemporary life” (p.2). Here it is important to underline that in order to achieve multiculturalism, it is not enough to be aware of its existence, but it needs to be embraced and accepted as well. Critics of multiculturalism see this as a growing ground for racism, rather than an arena for understanding: there is a danger that focus falls on the differences, on the categorisation of us versus them (Race 2015, p.23-28, Lundahl 2009, p.83-86).
2.5.5 Interculturalism

Lundahl (2009) writes that “it is within the meeting of people that culture is created” (p.103). With this statement in mind, it can be argued that interculturalism is what happens when multiculturalism is taken one step further: It is what happens within the interaction and communication between ethnic, religious, national, socio-economic - and other groups within the multicultural societies. Rather than “only” acknowledging and accepting each other there is an effort to understand the different viewpoints and social circumstances of the other. As stated by Race (2015), Shaules (2007, p.19-20) writes that “intercultural learning/.../ describe[s] the lived experience of dealing with an unfamiliar cultural environment” (p.112).

Where, in a worst case scenario, multiculturalism can be a Petri bowl of racism, (Race 2015, p.110-115; Lundahl 2009, p.83-86) interculturalism gives possibilities for understanding despite differences, and even understanding that, on a human level, we are more similar than not. As Tornberg (2009) writes, interculturalism is what happens “when students reflect over cultural differences and compare different cultures” (p.70) in order to “reach understanding” (p.71).

2.5.6 Cultural knowledge and cultural understanding

Chapman (2013) defines cultural knowledge as being the “Understanding of socio-linguistic and cultural norms which facilitate cultural integration and inter-cultural understanding” (p.1). It involves “an understanding of knowing, acting, being and living with others in society” (p.1). Due to our Global world, it is valid to further broaden this definition to include cross-border societies as well.

Although cultural understanding can be subjective, the view presented in this thesis is similar to that of Chapman’s, namely that understanding is reached through knowledge. Cultural understanding includes understanding of culture, multiculturalism, interculturalism and so on. In this thesis cultural knowledge and cultural understanding is sometimes referred to as being similar. This is due to the interlinked relationship between the two, and also due to some of the research articles referring to the terms as being similar as well: knowledge often facilitates - and leads to - understanding.

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7 Translated by the author.
2.5.7 Translanguaging
The term translanguaging, or translanguage, is a relatively new term used when dealing with processes taking place within the bilingual or multilingual learning arena. In order to explain its meaning two authors will be used, namely Garcia (2009) and Baker (2011).

According to Garcia (2009) “translanguaging is a pedagogical scaffolding technique in bilingual classrooms, making the additional language more comprehensible” (p.153). She means that in our ever increasingly global world, translanguaging is a necessary tool and resource to have, since it enables the learner to engage “cognitively and socially” and to communicate “in dominant languages” (p.157). Garcia (2009) validates her findings by discussing Vygotsky and his idea that learning is socially constructed, as well as mentioning Dewey’s theory about how learning occurs through doing (p.153).

Baker (2011) develops this understanding a little further by stating that “Translanguaging is the process of making meaning, shaping experiences, gaining understanding and knowledge through the use of two languages” (p.288).

As a short conclusion for this section, the following can be said: When looking at the definitions and explanations of the terminology presented, it becomes apparent that many of these concepts are similar, complementing, and interrelated. A word and concept that keeps occurring is “understanding”.

2.5.8 Acquisition
Chapman (2013) describes language acquisition as “the process of acquiring a new language over a period of time” (p.3). Tornberg (2009) has a similar definition when she writes that the term acquisition is used “in the context of language learning, and the achieved language ability as a whole” (p.219). However, she also says that when “Kraschen uses the concept of acquisition, it refers to the subconscious learning occurring through outer input and communication” (p.219).8

2.5.9 Literature
There are different types of literature used in the EFL setting, and according to Lundahl (2009) written texts dominate as a learning tool within the classroom (p.48). Although it can be argued that all written texts can be referred to as literature of sorts, this will not be

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8 Translated by the author.
the case in this thesis. Here the meaning of the word includes literary texts such as novels, short-stories, poems, and lyrics; fiction and non-fiction (Lundahl 2009, p.325).

Course material/course books will not be included in this study, since these texts are constructed with a specific target in mind; the education of students, hence written in a specific pedagogical manner.

2.5.10 Perspective
One of the research questions for this thesis focuses on which perspective comes through in the research articles; is it the teacher’s perspective, the student’s perspective, or maybe both? In order to answer this question the matter of “perspective” has to be developed further: In this thesis the perspective will mean what issues are dealt with in the articles - teaching or learning - but also whose voice is heard in the article; is there an adult, authoritative, voice, or is there a presence of students? Are both teaching and learning included in the arguments of the texts, and who is represented in the arguments?

2.5.11 Abbreviations
Some abbreviations relevant to the study are:
EFL: English as a Foreign Language
ESL: English as a Second Language
SLA: Second Language Acquisition
ELT: English language Teaching
CLT: Communicative Language Teaching

3. Methodology
When discussing how to write a literature review Murray and Beglar (2009) state that there are two ways to do this: one option is to “write an extremely long and thorough review of nearly all literature related to your study” (p.159). Another option is to “write a highly selective literature review by discussing only literature that has direct bearing on your topic” (p.159). Since this literature review is systematic and selective in terms of the research base, it is an example of the second option given.

This systematic and selective process has some benefits but also some constraints. The benefits are, as put by Murray and Beglar (2009), that the selection process and
analysis can be done “relatively rapidly” (p.159) which leaves more time to the actual interpretation and discussion of the findings (p.159). However negative aspects are that in the selective process there will be much material falling below the radar; hence some data that might have been crucial to the study is left out (Murray & Beglar 2009, p.159). In the selective process there is also a fine line between focusing on current research only, and not excluding something important simply because of its age (Murray & Beglar 2009, p.159).

When searching for material to be used – both for the background and for the actual in-depth review of theoretical articles, various electronic tools (such as computer, iPad and iPhone) have been used, as well as utilizing libraries, both locally in the greater area of Stockholm, and outside the state borders.

3.1 Selection criteria/strategies
As Murray and Beglar (2009) state, when conducting a systematic and selective literature review it is important to analyze a limited amount of research, as well as searching for articles directly relevant to the thesis title and questions (p.159). Therefore the aim\(^9\) of this thesis has been used when searching for research articles and texts, and only those found which are directly relevant to the thesis aim have been used for further analyses.

Search engines used when collecting the material are Summons, Eric, Google Scholar, Skolporten, and Project Muse. For search words and sentences used, see table 1. Summary of searches, below.

To give some outer structure and keep the study manageable according to the timeframe given, the numbers of research articles to be analyzed are between four and six. As well as this constriction, there is also a word limit for the written main text. Due to the word limitation this thesis will focus on five research articles.

In order to limit the search process further, the articles and/or theses need to have been peer-reviewed. Also, there is a timeframe given of the published research articles that is between 2005 and 2015. The reason for including research from 2005 and onwards

\(^9\) The aim of this thesis is to conduct a review of what current research says about if, and how, literature can be used within the English as a Foreign Language (EFL) classroom to enhance students’ communicative abilities and cultural understanding of the target country.
is what Murray and Beglar (2009) writes, when discussing the fine line between inclusion and exclusion of material: although it is important to have current and up to date research, it is also important not to exclude valid texts due to their age only (p.159).

Another factor affecting this literature review thesis is the availability of the found material: sometimes specific articles or doctoral theses that look suitable from the title or the abstract, have been inaccessible, making them impossible to include.

Since no relevant and current Swedish research has been found to analyze, the focus of this literature review has shifted towards the international arena. Therefore, when two articles seem equally suitable to be included, there is an added factor helping the selection process: The idea is to choose suitable articles from different geographical parts of the world. This can give an added perspective in the analysis process, since it emphasizes the globalization of the English language and its effect on us all.

The lack of Swedish research is problematic, and so as to still bring a Swedish perspective to this study, the international findings will be discussed in relation to the Swedish steering documents for the upper secondary school.

3.1.1 Table 1. Summary of searches

<table>
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<tr>
<th>Search engine</th>
<th>Search words</th>
<th>Restrictions</th>
<th>Hits</th>
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<th>Read abstracts</th>
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3.2 Method of Analysis

The material chosen for the in-depth literature review is categorized and analyzed from the perspective of the research questions. After the initial analysis of the individual research articles, part two of the analysis process takes place; namely to compare the findings. To help “communicate the information” (Murray & Beglar 2009, p.161) derived
from the articles, these findings are organized into a grid system, giving an overview of the results. This, in turn, gives transparency and helps in the comparative process of finding similarities and differences between the articles. The importance of clarity is something Murray and Beglar (2009) stress as well (p.161).

After comparing the summarized research results, and answering the research questions, the findings’ similarities and differences will be discussed.

3.3 Ethical aspects
This is a systematic literature review, and as such the ethical aspects are not the same as when conducting empirical studies. However ethical aspects have been upheld in this thesis by the selection process and the reporting of the analyzed results: Only peer-reviewed articles that give transparency regarding their written sources and have extensive reference-lists have been used. Also, the information retrieved from the analyzed results is reported correctly, without any alteration to suit a specific purpose.

4. Results
In this section the chosen research articles will be summarized, categorized, and thematically synthesized in accordance with – and in order to answer -the thesis questions. Due to word limitations the result of this process can be found in the tables 2.1 – 2.4 in the appendix. The results are also presented as written text below. Although the subheadings 4.1-4.4 are different in the text compared to the thesis questions and the titles of the tables in the appendix, they are directly related in content.

4.1 Literature and communicative abilities
All reviewed articles show that literature can be used to develop and improve students’ communicative abilities within the EFL setting (see appendix 2.1). Where they differ somewhat is in the phrasing of their answer to why this is. Erkaya (2005) writes that “Short stories /.../ help students to learn the four skills—listening, speaking, reading and writing” (p.1), and Alemi (2011) states that “Literature sharpens linguistic and cognitive skills” (p.178). Çubukcu & Tikiz (2013) emphasise literature’s capacity to teach “modes of address, expressions of time and place, and choice of vocabulary” (p.1), and Riwes Cruz’ (2010) states that literature use can give a “clearer idea about the syntactic structure
of a written text” (p.4). This, together with the other skills, can lead to both improved writing capacity and more eloquent speech (p.4).

Furthermore Çubukcu & Tikiz (2013) write that “reading involves the process of relating new knowledge to the old knowledge” (p.2-3.), which Erkaya also agrees with (2005, p.1). Charles (2011) is more vague and simply states that “literature reading could contribute to independent learning techniques [and has the] capacity to stimulate effective language Acquisition” (p.2, 10). He also seems less enthusiastic, which might stem from his “African” perspective giving awareness to the potential socio-cultural power struggle between neo-imperialism and previously colonised countries (p.1-3, 7).

Regarding the issue of how to best implement literature in the EFL setting (in order to develop and improve communicative skills) Erkaya (2005), Riwes Cruz (2010), and Çubukcu & Tikiz (2013) all agree and mention the importance of Pre-reading activities and “topic-introductions” (see table 2.1 in the appendix). As well as these activities, the importance of reading literature both individually and in groups are brought up (Erkaya 2005, p.3; Çubukcu & Tikiz 2013, p.5; Charles 2011, p.10; Alemi 2011, p.179). Furthermore, all five articles deem discussions - both in groups and in one-to-one settings - as important, as well as reflections and analyses about the read text (Çubukcu & Tikiz 2013, p.5; Riwes Cruz 2010, p.9; Alemi 2011,p.179; Charles 2011, p.10; Erkaya 2005, p.5-7).

4.2 Literature and cultural understanding
Çubukcu & Tikiz’s (2013) reason for why literature is so useful will be used to sum up all authors’ thoughts about the issue: Literature teaches “values, attitudes, concepts and relations of a given cultural moment” (p.1). It enables cultural knowledge acquisition (p.1), and enables students to broaden their perspectives and make “connections between the target culture and their own knowledge” (p.1). The authors state that there is no true language ability without cultural knowledge (p.4).

Alemi (2011) writes about literature as a tool to enable “understanding of the human condition” (p.178). According to her, it is a “doorway into another culture” (p.178), giving students insights and understandings for “cultures and ideologies different from their own” (p.178). Riwes Cruz (2010) agrees with Alemi and states that literature can give meaning and cultural understanding (p.8), and cultural understanding, in turn,
enables “intercultural communication” (p.7). According to Riwes Cruz (2010), culture has no separation from the four skills of “writing, reading, listening and speaking” (p.5), rather it is present in all four.

When discussing how to implement literature into the EFL setting in order to develop and improve students’ cultural understanding, similar factors as with the communicative skills are applied. Çubukcu & Tikiz (2013) write that there needs to be extensive reading, but it is important to complement the reading with other exercises as well: There needs to be allowance for a “Pre-reading phase, while-reading phase and post-reading phase” (p.4, 9). Erkaya (2005) emphasises this as well (p.8-10).

Other didactic factors emerging through the articles are the importance of the teacher’s role in this process (especially voiced by Riwes Cruz 2010, p.6), and the importance of reflection and group discussions (Charles 2011, p.7; Erkaya 2005, p.8-10; Riwes Cruz 2010, p.9; Çubukcu & Tikiz 2013, p.6).

4.3 Potential challenges when using literature

According to the analyzed articles, potential challenges to be aware of when using literature in the EFL setting are that the students can perceive the literature as “difficult”, “hard to understand”, and “not relevant” to students ”lives” (Alemi 2011, p.177). If the difficulty level of the text is too high, it can create frustration with the pupil (Erkaya 2005, p.6), and come across as meaningless (Riwes Cruz 2010, p.6). When the material is repetitive or perceived as having no meaning, the students get bored. When bored there will not be learning to its full potential (Çubukcu & Tikiz 2013, p.9).

In order to lessen these negative aspects the authors give several suggestions how to handle the situation, namely: choose suitable literature; literature that engages and feels relevant to the students (Erkaya 2005, p.5; Riwes Cruz 2010, p.6-8; Çubukcu & Tikiz 2013, p.9; Alemi 2011, p.179). If needed; give pre-reading information and have discussions in class (Erkaya 2005, p.4-6; Alemi 2011, p.179), and when discussing; do so critically – and compare both cultures and ideas within the group (Riwes Cruz 2010, p.6-8).

There is one author who expresses a difference of opinion from the rest, when dealing with the potential challenges caused by literature use in the EFL setting, namely Charles (2011). His concern is that the use of English can be seen as an expression of
cultural imperialism (p.1-4, 7). Although there are no easy fixes to this dilemma, he believes that the problem can get lessened by including more books from the African continent into the African EFL, and specifically from the country the student lives in; books that contain recognisable cultural markers. Another suggestion is to include the same books in English and in the native language. This way there is a possibility to compare two books of the same subject matter, when confused about the actual cultural meaning in the text (p.9).

4.4 Perspectives in the research articles

As mentioned in section 2.5.10, when studying the perspectives in the articles, focus lie on both 1) content and 2) voice/narrative. This, in turn, means that the answer to the research question needs to be twofold. For the research question used; see table 2.4 in the appendix.

Overall both student issues (learning), and teacher issues (teaching) are discussed in the research articles. Erkaya (2005) points out both what teachers and students can do and might learn, as do Çubukcu and Tikiz (2013). Charles (2011) includes issues relevant to both teachers and students, but leans more towards the teacher’s, or in this case his own. Alemi (2011) also deals with issues concerning both teaching and learning; however her focus is more towards the students, and finally Riwes Cruz (2010): He has a student-perspective in his text, with a little focus on the teacher role as well.

When looking at 1) the content, it can be argued that all articles discuss issues concerning both teaching and learning to a varied degree, hence have both teacher and student perspectives represented in their texts.

However, when focusing on 2) whose voice comes across in the article, the answer to the question has to be different than that above. In the analysis a unanimous pattern emerges within all five articles; namely that the voice coming through is that of an adult or a teacher. There is an absence of first-hand accounts of what the students themselves perceive and think about the use of literature in the classroom, and how literature can be used as a tool to develop and improve communicative skills and cultural understanding.
5. Discussion

The aim of this thesis is to conduct a review of what current research says about if, and how, literature can be used within EFL to enhance students’ communicative skills and cultural understanding of the target country. The following research questions are used to achieve this aim:

- Can literature be used to develop and improve communicative skills within the EFL setting? If yes – why and how?
- Can literature be used to develop and improve cultural understanding within the EFL setting? If yes – why and how?
- What are the challenges when using literature to develop and improve students’ communicative abilities and cultural understanding within the EFL setting? How can they be minimized?
- Which perspective comes through in the reviewed research; teacher, student, or both?

5.1 Main Findings

According to all authors of the analyzed research articles, literature can be used to develop and improve students’ communicative skills and cultural understanding within the EFL setting. Where they differ somewhat is in the emphasis on why this is, and how to best implement the literature into the EFL classroom in order to enable students’ development and improvement of the skills mentioned.

When defining communicative competence, Tornberg (2009) writes about the ability to understand and being understood. In order to possess this ability to communicate there is a need for other competencies as well, such as linguistic-, pragmatic-, and strategic competencies. As well as these, there is a need for socio-cultural understanding (Tornberg 2009, p.224-225).

This idea that communicative competence cannot stand alone is also pointed out in the research articles, and when discussing why literature is good to use in the EFL-classroom Erkaya (2005) states that “Short stories [...] help students to learn the four skills—listening, speaking, reading and writing” (p.1). This is something Alemi (2011)
agrees with, and she specifically states that literature can assist in sharpening “linguistic and cognitive skills” (p.178). This validates Lundahl’s (2009) position as well (p.326-327).

Çubukcu & Tikiz’s (2013) reason to why literature is a good didactic tool within the EFL-setting, is that according to them, literature also has a capacity to teach “plot, characterization and theme” as well as “modes of address, expressions of time and place, and choice of vocabulary” (p.1). Riwes Cruz (2010) agrees with these statements, and adds that literature use also enables a “clearer idea about the syntactic structure of a written text” (p.4). All of the reasons found in the articles to why literature is usable, validates Lundahl’s (2009) view on literature use as well (p.326-327).

When analyzing the studies and what they say about how the literature needs to be dealt with in the EFL classroom, it is clear that they all use some, if not all, of Vygotsky’s sociocultural approach to the learning process. Both Çubukcu & Tikiz (2013) and Erkaya (2005) believe that there needs to be allowance for a pre-, while-, and post-reading phase (p.4, 9; p.8-10), both in relation to improving the communicative skills and the cultural understanding. The teacher’s role is especially voiced by Riwes Cruz (2010, p.6) as being an important support figure to the students in their learning process. The importance of reflection and group discussions are emphasised as well (Erkaya 2005, p.8-10; Riwes Cruz 2010, p.9; Charles 2011, p.7; Çubukcu & Tikiz 2013, p.6).

Çubukcu and Tikiz (2013, p.2-3) and Erkaya (2005, p.1) agree that the reading process involves having to relate new knowledge to that which is already known. Charles (2011) is more vague however, and simply states that “literature reading could contribute to independent learning techniques [and has the] capacity to stimulate effective language Acquisition” (p.2, 10) – in other words, he comes across as less impressed with Vygotsky’s ideology of a socialised learning, than the other authors.

Mekheimer (2011) states that language-, and culture teachings are inseparable (p.45), and according to Bobkina and Dominguez (2014) literature might be “one of the best ways to understand culture and traditions of the target language” (p.251). These ideas correlate directly with the findings in the research review since Riwes Cruz (2010) argues that culture is inseparable from the four skills of “writing, reading, listening and speaking” (p.5). He also points out that language “is a receptacle and transmitter of
habits, traditions, routines, social and economical contexts...it can reflect the human soul” (p.1) and it also enables “intercultural communication” (p.7).

Tornberg (2009) defines interculturalism as the process where “students reflect over cultural differences and compare different cultures [in order to] reach understanding” (p.71). After the analysis of the research articles, the result shows that literature has the capacity to enable, both communicative skills and cultural understanding. This is important in our global world, and should be the aim of every EFL classroom, since understanding can lead to empathy.

5.1.1 Potential challenges
Both Magnusson (2008, p.43) and Lundahl (2009, p.48-49) point out that there can be difficulties within the EFL setting when working with literature. This is also brought to light in the research material. When using literature as a tool in the EFL setting, it is important for the teacher to be thorough and have a well conceived plan. The students’ abilities have to be considered, as well as their likes and dislikes in the material selection process (Erkaya 2005, p.5; Riwes Cruz 2010, p.6-8; Alemi 2011, p.179; Çubukcu & Tikiz 2013, p.9). This is in order to facilitate subject meaning and emotional connection to the material, since meaning and validity enables the wish to learn. Regarding the academic aspect there is a fine line, however, between pushing enough for the students’ learning improvement, and pushing too much, so that they lose interest in the subject (Erkaya 2005, p.6; Riwes Cruz 2010, p.6; Alemi 2011, p.177; Çubukcu & Tikiz 2013, p.9).

According to Race (2015) there is no escape from culture, due to it being ingrained into our very existence as human beings (p.2). This philosophy helps showcase a dilemma within some parts of the EFL world. As pointed out by Charles (2011) in his article, there can be an issue with using English in certain parts of the world. Svartvik (2004) argues that the international discourse labels the English language as powerful, and by acquiring it, some of that power transfers to the individual (p.13, 227.229). As well as being potentially powerful, the English language is also associated with democracy (Axelsson 2005, p.96-98; Bernhardsson 2005, p.165), but simultaneously the language brings memories of colonial pasts. Hence a person’s wish to join the “power” of
being able to communicate internationally might be marred by the wish to break free from the neo-colonial shackles.

Charles’ (2011) small scale solution to this dilemma is to incorporate native literature alongside the English one in school libraries. If there are translations of the same book, there is a possibility to compare the two language texts if confused about its meaning (p.9). By using this approach, the groundwork will be laid to enable and speed up the translanguaging - as well as the intercultural - process.

5.1.2 The research articles in relation to the Swedish EFL
The findings in the research review correlate with the Swedish state documents regarding EFL and the focus on the importance of communication and cultural understanding; as well as the importance of literature use. The English syllabus documents state that the Swedish upper secondary students will be taught:

“Living conditions, attitudes, values and traditions, as well as social, political and cultural conditions in different contexts and parts of the world where English is used. The spread of English and its position in the world [as well as] Content and form in different kinds of fiction” (Skolverket 2011b:3).

This shows that the skills that the national curriculum stipulates should be taught to the Swedish students, are directly mirroring that of the results from the international study, thus justifying this literature review – despite its lack of Swedish research material.

5.2 Limitations
Due to the nature of this thesis, being a systematic and selective literature review, there are many limitations and circumstances affecting the outcome of the results. The point of this kind of study is to search for, select, analyze, and synthesize a limited amount of material. The chosen articles and peer-reviewed studies need to be directly relevant to the thesis title and questions. This means that much material, maybe crucial information, might go unnoticed. As well as these aspects it can be argued that the study is angled already in the construction of aim and research questions, hence not giving an unbiased result. So, possible limitations can be:

- The phrasing of the thesis aim, or the research questions
- The actual search process and the selection process
- The number of articles used in the analysis
- The timeframe and word-limitations given to conduct the study
- The analysis itself might give a result “wanted” by the researcher
- There can be difficulty controlling potential ethical aspects in the material discussed in the articles
- There is a lack of Swedish research

With its focus on five research articles, the analysis cannot claim to be a universal truth, however the findings show a pattern of sorts, and it still bears validity in relation to the thesis aim and questions, and the field of focus.

5.3 Further research

Although the international findings of this thesis show that the results are relevant to the Swedish upper secondary school as well, there is still a great need for studies to be conducted on the Swedish school system. Special focus should be on the upper secondary school, with its students about to enter fully into the global society.

What is evident in the analysis is that although there exists a varied degree of subject matter relating to both students’ learning and teachers’ teaching, it is mostly told from the perspective of an authoritative adult. The students’ thoughts and experiences in the matter of literature use and its abilities to develop and improve communicative abilities and cultural understanding are absent. Therefore there is a need, not only to conduct studies on EFL in the Swedish school system, but specifically on the experiences of the students who are affected by the didactic decisions made. What is their view regarding literature use, how would they like it to be used in the classroom, can they see benefits, and if there are challenging aspects; what are they and how can they be reduced? These are important questions to be researched and answered nationally, and there is a void to be filled internationally as well. Therefore, answers retrieved from studies conducted on EFL in the Swedish upper secondary school system and its students can become valid and important internationally as well – just like the international findings are relevant within the current Swedish EFL setting.
5.4 Conclusion

After reading and analyzing the research articles used in this thesis, it is evident that there is an important place for literature in the EFL setting. When used correctly, literature can be an excellent tool to enable students’ development and improvement of their communicative abilities and cultural understanding. Furthermore, the analysis shows that communication and cultural understanding are inevitably intertwined, since cultural understanding enables communication and communication - in turn - enables further cultural understanding.

The findings of the study show that there is a consensus regarding the need to be able to communicate in our ever-increasingly global world; regardless of geographical location. This knowledge is also directly evident in the Swedish state steering documents for the upper secondary school.

The results of the literature review is directly relevant to the Swedish steering documents for upper secondary school, since these also emphasise the importance of communicational skills, cultural understanding and the use of literature in the EFL-setting. In a way it can be argued that literature is both the enabling tool to develop and improve the communicative abilities and cultural understanding, as well as the binding link between the two capacities. As voiced in this thesis; one cannot exist without the other.

Although the results from the international articles reflect the intention of the steering documents for the Swedish upper secondary school they also highlight the lack of Swedish studies. Furthermore, as well as highlighting the need for studies within the Swedish EFL, the articles also show the lack of much needed student perspectives.
References


## Appendix

Table 2.1 Research Question: Can literature be used to develop and improve communicative skills within the EFL setting? If yes – why and how?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Title</th>
<th>Author(s)</th>
<th>Year(s)</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>“The Role of Literature and Culture in English Language Teaching”</td>
<td>José Hernández Riwes Cruz</td>
<td>2010. (Mexico)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>“The Use of Literary Works in an EFL Class”</td>
<td>Minoo Alemi</td>
<td>2011. (Iran)</td>
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</table>

### YES.

**WHY:**
- “Short stories... help students to learn the four skills—listening, speaking, reading and writing” (1).
- “literature reading could contribute to independent learning techniques” (2).
- “capacity to stimulate effective language Acquisition” (2, 10).
- “literature enhances ELT through elements such as authentic material, language in use and aesthetic representation of the spoken language” (1).
- “literature opens up a different world of “language uses, forms, or conventions” (178).
- “Literature sharpens linguistic and cognitive skills” (178).
- It provides a “clearer idea about the syntactic structure of a written text” (4) and how this differs to spoken language. This leads to improved writing skills and more eloquent speech (4)
- “the student needs to READ (2).”  
  When working on a text there is a “pre-reading” phase where relevant information is given (4)  
  Combining exercises for “vocabulary, analyses of literature and lyrics (9), topic introduction, reflection of both written text and the thought process (10).”  
  Combining exercises for “vocabulary, class discussions about the text, pre-knowledge discussions, loud reading, silent individual reading, “follow-up discussions” (179). Use role play or write short stories about the text (180).”

### WHY:
- “literature response... peer discussion of texts” (10).
- “reading involves the process of relating new knowledge to the old knowledge” (2, 3)
- “In order to be able to communicate in a meaningful way the student needs to READ (2).”
- “In order to be able to communicate in a meaningful way the student needs to READ (2).”
- “pre-reading activities, factual in-class work, analysis and extending activities” (6).
- “writing and acting out dialogues”( 3).
- “Introducing
Both individual and group-work, loud reading in class, and individual reading (5-7).

grammarspeaking, and listening skills” (11).

and collectively in class, as well as group and class discussions about the texts (5).

“Pre-reading phase, while-reading phase and post-reading phase” (9).
Table 2.2 Research Question: Can literature be used to develop and improve cultural understanding within the EFL setting? If yes – why and how?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>“Benefits of Using Short Stories in the EFL Context”</th>
<th>“Reading the Word and Reading the World...”</th>
<th>“The Role of Literature and Culture in English Language Teaching”</th>
<th>“Symbiotic Interface Between Literature, Culture and Language Learning”</th>
<th>“The Use of Literary Works in an EFL Class”</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

### YES.

#### WHY:
“students can gain insight into literature by gaining entrance to a world familiar or unfamiliar to them due to the cultural aspects of stories, and taking a voyage from the literary text to their own minds to find meanings for ideas, leading to critical thinking” (2).

#### HOW:
Using texts with cultural content, and giving relevant information about the text subject both before and during the work on the text (8-10). This encourages dialogue and critical thinking.

### YES.

#### WHY:
“literature reading could contribute to ... awareness of global issues and cultures” (2).

“meaningfully teaching or learning language independently of culture is impossible” (6).

“interaction with literature is among the most culture-bound linguistic interactions... indeed learning a second language is learning a second culture...”(7).

#### HOW:
“comprehension and discussion questions to promote meaningful cultural comparison” (6).

“peer discussion” (7).

### YES.

#### WHY:
Language, and its representation through the written word, “is a receptacle and transmitter of habits, traditions, routines, social and economical contexts...it can reflect the human soul”(1)

Culture is not separate from the four skills of “writing, reading, listening and speaking” (5) rather it is present in all four.

It enables “intercultural communication” (7).

Gives meaning and understanding when communicating (8).

#### HOW:
The teacher needs to “guide the students” (6)

Students reflect

### YES.

#### WHY:
“Acquire cultural knowledge” (1)

Literature teaches “values, attitudes, concepts and relations of a given cultural moment” (1).

It enables students to broaden their perspectives and make “connections between the target culture and their own knowledge” (1).

There is no true language ability without cultural knowledge (4).

#### HOW:
Extensive reading (4), When working on a text there is a “pre-reading” phase where relevant information is given (4).

Teacher-led group and class discussions about cultural matters (6).

### YES.

#### WHY:
“doorway into another culture” (178) giving insight and understanding for “cultures and ideologies different from their own” (178).

Literature enables “understanding of the human condition” (178).

#### HOW:
Through reading literature students experience that it is “full of feelings and emotions, imagination and creativity” (180) reading, silent individual reading, “follow-up discussions” (179).

Use role play or write short stories about the text (180).
over the intercultural process taking place – discussions (9). “Pre-reading phase, while-reading phase and post-reading phase” (9).

Table 2.3 Research Question: What are the challenges when using literature to develop and improve students’ communicative abilities/skills and cultural understanding within the EFL setting? How can they be minimized?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>“Benefits of Using Short Stories in the EFL Context”</th>
<th>“Reading the Word and Reading the World...:”</th>
<th>“The Role of Literature and Culture in English Language Teaching”</th>
<th>“Symbiotic Interface Between Literature, Culture and Language Learning”</th>
<th>“The Use of Literary Works in an EFL Class”</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

If the difficulty level of the text is too high, it can create frustration with the pupil (6). Misunderstanding of - and negative opinions against – the foreign culture might occur (8). In order to minimize this: choose suitable literature – that engages and feels relevant to the students (5). If needed; give pre-reading information and discuss in class (4-6).

The use of English can be seen as cultural imperialism. (1ff, 7). In order to minimize this: by including more books from the African continent, and specifically from Ethiopia – books that contain recognisable cultural markers. Another suggestion is to include the same books in English and in the native language. This way there is a possibility to compare when confused about the actual cultural meaning of the books (9).

If not done correctly, it might be perceived as “meaningless” by the students, or give them an incorrect understanding of the target culture (6). In order to minimize this: Find relevant literature, avoid simple factual data where imagination is not evoked, discuss critically, and compare (6-8).

If the material is repetitive or perceived as irrelevant the students get bored. When bored there will not be learning to its full potential (9). In order to minimize this: Be varied in material choice, and find material that the students can relate to (9).

The literature might seem “difficult”, “hard to understand”, and “not relevant” to students’ “lives” (77). In order to minimize this: Alemi quotes Hill (1994). Students’ needs have to be taken into consideration: - “the linguistic and stylistic level of the text - the amount of background information required for a true appreciation of the material.” (179).
Table 2.4 Research Question: Which perspective comes through in the reviewed research – teacher, student or both?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Research Question</th>
<th>Author(s)</th>
<th>Year and Location</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>“Reading the Word and Reading the World...”</td>
<td>By Paul Michael Charles</td>
<td>2011, (a perspective on an Ethiopian educational issue)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>“The Role of Literature and Culture in English Language Teaching”</td>
<td>By José Hernández Riwes Cruz</td>
<td>2010, (Mexico)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>“Symbiotic Interface Between Literature, Culture and Language Learning”</td>
<td>By Tikiz, Gülsah &amp; Çubukcu, Feryal</td>
<td>2013, (Turkey)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>“The Use of Literary Works in an EFL Class”</td>
<td>By Minoo Alemi</td>
<td>2011, (Iran)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**TEACHER**

It mentions what teachers can do, and what students can do and might learn, so in that sense it can be argued that BOTH teacher and student perspectives are dealt with. However, although the issues are dealt with both regarding the teaching and the learning, the findings are told from a “teaching-perspective”, rather than voiced by students.

**TEACHER**

Although there is a concern about the students’ perception of the use of literature in the EFL-context, the perspective from which this issue is dealt with, is still from the teacher’s point of view.

**TEACHER**

Although focus lies on what benefits students, there are no student representatives in the study – the perspective is still written from an adult, teacher’s point of view.

**TEACHER**

Teachers are given concrete examples of how to conduct teaching, and students’ perspectives are being discussed as well. But as with the other articles the first-hand account of the students’ experiences is lacking.

**TEACHER**

This article also discusses issues relevant to both teaching and learning, but there is still a lack of students’ own first-hand experiences of and thoughts about the use of literature in the EFL-setting.