The Empowerment of Teaching Modern English and American Literary Texts to EFL Emirati University Students: New Pedagogical Approach

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Abstract

The present paper examines the difficulties encountered by Emirati students in comprehending English and American literary texts due to semantic and trans-cultural ambiguities deployed in the target texts. The paper identifies several types of culturally loaded vocabulary embedded in American slang and popular culture proliferated on a wide scale in contemporary American fictional and dramatic texts. Due to lack of cross-cultural and collocational knowledge on the part of EFL students, culturally determined vocabulary such as military slang in American war novels represents a major obstacle in analyzing and understanding the texts. Since most of the American slang and idiomatic expressions in literary texts are language and culture specific elements with no equivalence in TL, Emirati EFL students fail to understand them. Through inappropriate inter-lingual transfers, they reach perplexing conclusions formulating misconceptions about English language.

Key words: Inter-lingual transfers, Collocational knowledge, Fictional and dramatic texts, Military slang, Idiomatic expressions, Trans-cultural ambiguities.
Introduction

While lexical problems are integral to L₂ acquisition and learning, language studies prioritize phonological and syntactical areas of research giving less attention to lexical paradigms. Nevertheless, lexical errors are disruptive and handicapping on the part of EFL/ESL learners simply became it is in the choice of words that effective communication is hindered on a large scale. Further, lexical research focuses on the paradigmatic relations of lexical items (the relations among a set of lexical items - within the same class - which can be replaced by one another in specific grammatical / lexical contexts) and gives less attention to the syntagmatic aspects of lexis (the ability of items to co-occur, known as collocation). This study - which targets the L₂ performance of EFL Emirati students at the English Literature Department of UAE University - argues that students’ lack of sufficient knowledge of the collocational patterns of lexical items lead to collocational errors which undermine the development of their language skills. Consequently, they encounter obstacles in dealing with texts integral to Western literary canons.

In a related context, it is relevant to argue that effective L₂ acquisition signifies an awareness of SL culture due to the dual connection between language and society. Acquiring L₂ language cultural aspects has a tremendous impact upon the function of language patterns and brings about cultural competence integral to communicative competence. Apparently, cultural competence implies an understanding of SL values, beliefs as well as the cross-cultural distinctions between L₁ and L₂ in addition to an awareness of extra linguistic knowledge about the major spheres of people’s life in SL countries. The knowledge obtained about a foreign culture through T.V. programs, movies, newspapers, magazines, books and electronic media is not sufficient for EFL/ESL learners to comprehend literary texts produced by native language writers. Proper understanding of L₂ literary discourse requires a high level of proficiency and cultural competence adequate to an understanding of the content and the aesthetic value of a fictional text (Zavyalova 2001: 570).

In order to understand L₂ fictional texts, for example, the EFL/ESL learners penetrate into the heart of the target culture because literature / fiction conveys feelings, emotions, views and attitudes typical of a foreign culture. The comprehension of a foreign fictional text depends on the EFL learner’s language competence because language carries the cultural code. Further, an understanding of the fictional text depends on the learner’s background and cultural knowledge which should be relevant to that of the author. Since every culture consists of national and international components, the semantics of a language simultaneously reflects universal and culturally-oriented elements.

Moreover, socio-cultural components are embedded in the semantic structure of a language. When used in fictional contexts, culturally-loaded vocabulary elements convey additional allocations which transcend their original lexical meaning. Explicitly, these linguistically-culturally loaded vocabulary items represent a major obstacle for EFL learners unaware of L₂ collocational knowledge and cultural components. The extensive proliferation of these lexical elements in contemporary English and American literature obscures the literary texts when approached by EFL learners ignorant of L₂ cultural correlations and linguistic entanglements.
These culturally-loaded vocabulary structures can be roughly divided into two major categories: word combinations which carry a universal/international code and lexical items possessing local/national cultural significations. An appropriate awareness of both categories of vocabulary is essential to an understanding of fictional texts. However, the second category represents an obstacle for EFL learners because it is endowed with culturally oriented vocabulary structures rooted in local environments. It is difficult for EFL learners to grasp these vocabulary items without relevant knowledge and background experience about the target culture. On this basis, it is obvious that the cultural gap separating EFL learners from the target language- they seek to learn- represents one of the basic obstacles which undermine their comprehension of an L2 literary text.

In other words, culturally-oriented information is rendered by means of culturally-colored vocabulary called (realia) – the denotative part of the meaning associated with information from background knowledge. Such denotive realia reflects the peculiarities of the social, political and cultural customs and traditions of the socio-lingual entity under consideration. Nevertheless, these culturally-loaded vocabulary structures - due to their universal nature- are comprehended by EFL learners because they have no cultural connotations: e.g. “We were sitting at one of those tables, the kind they used to have in the drugstore when you were a boy and took your high school sweetie to get «that chocolate banana split» (Warren’s All the King’s Men 1979). The preceding statement reflects the emotional condition of the narrator who recalls some memories from his adolescent years. Apparently, the direct/lexical meaning of the underlined word combinations is: “chocolate ice-cream with small pieces of banana filled with syrup”. On the semantic level the EFL learner can easily understand the meaning of the underlined vocabulary structures above by consulting the dictionary. However, there are other vocabulary structures with cultural connotations inconceivable by the EFL learners who lack knowledge about the target culture. In All the King’s Men, a novel by the American writer, Robert Penn Warren one of the characters says: “I Like my Vanilla”. The meaning of the underlined word - combination, on the semantic level, suggests “ice-cream”. Nevertheless, an interpretation of the phase within the cultural context of the novel affirms that it is not about ice-cream but it underlined the speaker’s relation to other races. Thus the phrase “I like my Vanilla» means “I do not like African-Americans” or people with black skin (cited in Zavyalova 2001: 570).

Obviously, fiction includes culturally-loaded vocabulary structures - like the items cited above- reflecting the author’s culture or subjective vision because fiction is one of the main sources of culturally-related vocabulary central to the process of cross cultural communication. These vocabulary items, due to their cultural peculiarities, are not comprehended by EFL learners who are often unaware of the target culture. Moreover, authors, in their portrayal of fictional characters, incorporate culturally-determined vocabulary to reveal the outward appearance as well as the inner life of particular characters. The following extract from Warren’s All the King’s Men illustrates this phenomenon: “Alex Mitchell who has two brown eyes which do not belong above that classic torso which keep fidgeting around like a brace of Mexican Jumping beans”. Here, the comparison lies in the fact that the seeds of the Mexican trees and bushes, in which the Carpocarsa Saltitano butterfly puts its grubs, start jumping when the growing grip moves. This Realia, unfamiliar to the EFL learners, helps the author to create a bright image of the character and through the description of Alex’s eyes; the author expresses his emotional state. The underlined Realia
reveals a sharp contrast between Alex’s strong body and his “fidgeting eyes”. The contradiction in appearance of the character of Alex displays his nervousness and uncertainty, two qualities inconceivable by the EFL learners due to lack of cultural background knowledge. Explicitly, one of the basic roles of culturally-oriented vocabulary is to create character images often reflect the authorial vision. Through character delineation, first person narration and character’s speech, the author attempts to fulfill particular aesthetic purposes integral to the aesthetic function of the literary text. An EFL learner-unaware of the cultural connotations of TL vocabulary-often reach conclusions different from those intended by the author.

In this context, it is relevant to argue that word combinations with the same denotations may evoke different associations in the minds of different learners from different cultures. In addition to the fact that word combinations with the same denotations may evoke different associations in the minds of learners from different cultures, the culturally oriented vocabulary under consideration includes lexical structures with cultural connotations representing an obstacle to EFL learners who often misinterpret them. Implanted in literary and fictional texts and complicated by their cultural peculiarities, these vocabulary items constitute an obstacle which hinders the EFL learners from grasping the TL text in an appropriate manner. Evoking connotations which are different from their dictionary meaning, these vocabulary structures prevent the EFL learners from interpreting the authorial message leading to misconception and misunderstanding of the target text.

As an integral part of the compositional structure of fictional literature, the culturally-determined vocabulary plays a significant role within the aesthetic structure of literary texts. Therefore the EFL learner understands of the culturally loaded vocabulary items is crucial to a successful penetration into the core of the literary texts and the authorial visions as well. English Department Emirati students- like other EFL learners- experience many difficulties in dealing with culturally-loaded vocabulary encountered in their literature courses. After several years of teaching English and American literature to Emirati students, I was able to identify different categories of culturally-determined vocabulary constituting obstacles in the comprehension of Western literary texts. These categories include widely used lexical structures consisting of new meanings attributed either to existing words or lexical items made up of new words lying outside standard polite usage.

The First category

This category includes culturally determined words combinations related to the issue of race and discrimination. For example the following extract is cited from one of William Faulkner’s novels: “the idea is if we don’t look out, "the white race" will be utterly submerged. It’s all scientific stuff, it’s been proved” (cited in Zavyalova 2001: 571). Apparently, the underlined phrase reveals the attitude of the persona toward the problem of racial segregation stating his view about the superiority of the white race. The concept of racism in America is not often familiar to EFL learners coming from another culture. The American author F. Scott Fitzgerald, in The Great Gatsby, a classical novel, discusses the idea of the American dream underlining the necessity of placing restrictions on immigration to USA during the 1920’s: “well, these books are all scientific, insisted Tom; this fellow has worked out the whole thing. It’s up to us, who are "the dominant race», to watch out or "the
"other races" will have control of things." Explicitly, the speaker Tom Buchanan, a major character in the novel and a rich white man, does not consider USA as a large colony of settlers or a melting pot and does not want the country to accept more immigrants.

In the African-American drama Dutchman, Le Roi Jones, the writer of the play, deploys culturally-oriented vocabulary structures integral to the racial situation in USA in the 1960’s. EFL Emirati students found difficulties in understanding such a text due to lack of knowledge about the cultural connotations of the vocabulary items used in the play as in the following extracts:

1. Lula, addressing Clay: “What’ve you got that jacket and tie on in all this heat for? And why’ve you wearing a jacket and tie like that? Did your people ever burn witches or start revolutions over the price of tea? Boy, those narrow shoulder clothes come from a tradition you ought to feel opposed by. A three button suit. What right do you have to be wearing a three-button suit and striped tie? Your grandfather was a slave, he didn’t go to the Harvard”. The preceding lines are uttered by Lula, a white lady who symbolizes the mainstream American culture. These sarcastic lines are addressed to Clay, a middle class African – American who attempts to be integrated into the white American society, thus, he imitates white Americans in terms of dress and behavior ignoring his racial roots. To an EFL student from the UAE, the entire extract is only about a woman who criticizes a man because she does not like his clothes. Unable to perceive the racist agenda embedded in culturally loaded vocabulary items dispersed in the extract, due to lack of cultural knowledge of the target text, the EFL learners reach conclusions outside the context of the text.

2. Lula: “I bet you never once thought you were black nigger”. Clay: “well, in college I thought I was Baudelaire. But I’ve slowed down since”. Within the cultural context of the play, the writer castigates Clay, an epitome of the African-American middle class, who believes that he is superior to the rest of the African-American community “a black Baudelaire”. The reference to the famous French poet is misinterpreted by EFL Emirati students who jump to mistaken conclusions. Their unawareness of American culture and lack of knowledge about the racial situation in USA in the 1960’s, lead to textual misinterpretations.

3. Lula: “And with my apple-eating hand I push open the door and lead you, my tender big-eyed prey into my God, what can I call it... into my hovel”. Clay: “then what happens?” Lula: “After the dancing and games, after the long drinks and long walks, the real fun begins. And you’ll call my rooms black as a grave. You’ll say, ‘this place is like Juliet’s tomb’.

The above cited extracts include two important vocabulary structures loaded with cultural connotations that EFL Emirati students failed to understand. First, the reference to the apple as a biblical and Western traditional symbol of temptation indicates that Lula or white America tempts Clay by offering him false promises of integration. Further, Lula within the complicated symbolic structure of the play represents Eve who convinced Adam/Clay to eat from the forbidden tree; consequently, he will be driven out of
paradise/America. The second reference is to “Juliet’s tomb” which is associated with death. The allusion to Shakespeare’s Romeo and Juliet paves the way for the murder of Clay at the hands of Lula by the end of the play. However, both references, due to their cultural peculiarities are not conceived by EFL Emirati students who come from a different culture.

4. Lula: “Do all these people frighten you?”
   Clay: Why should they frighten me?
   Lula: Because you’re an escaped rigger. Because you crawled through the wire and made tracks to my side.
   Clay: Wire?
   Lula: Don’t they have wire around plantations?
   Clay: You must be Jewish. All you can think about is wire.”

Through references to “plantations” Lula aims to remind Clay of the slavery era when blacks were forced to live in plantations surrounded by wires. She attempts to argue that she is superior to him and consequently he has to keep the status quo. On the other hand, the writer’s allusions to wires and the analogy between Southern American plantations and the Nazi concentration camps in Europe are integral to the artistic vision of Le Roi Jones. The African American writer points out that his people will inevitably be massacred like European Jews, the victim of the Nazi holocaust in case they attempt to be integrated into the mainstream white American society. The preceding dialogue includes vocabulary items loaded with cultural connotations unfamiliar to EFL Emirati learners who are not aware of the catastrophic ramifications of the holocaust or the history of American slavery or the socio-political situation in the USA in the sixties.

5. Lula: And that’s how the blues was born. The little niggers sitting on a limp, but none of them ever looked like him. Yes, come on Clay. Let’s do the nasty. Rub bellies. Let’s rub bellies on the train. Do the gritty grind like your old rag-head mammy. Shake it, shake it! Let’s do the choo-choo train shuffle, the navel stretcher.

These humiliating comments, uttered by Lula, could be considered as an attempt to underestimate African-American history and popular traditions viewing “the blues” as a kind of belly rubbing. The sarcastic allusions to the blues – music / singing associated with black history of pain and suffering in USA - is considered as humiliating remarks by Clay. Consequently, he becomes furious at Lula threatening to punish her in a brutal way and bring havoc to the New York subway car where the incidents of the play take place. The ambiguous cultural references to the “blues” traditions are beyond the reach of EFL learners. Due to their unawareness of the socio-historical collocations of the term “blues” in African-American culture, Emirati students consider Clay’s reaction to Lula’s abusive comments – which are justified- as morally unacceptable reaching mistaken conclusions about the meaning of the text.

6. Lula: "Clay, you liver lipped white man. You would be Christian. You aren’t no nigger, you’re just a dirty white man. That’s all you know..... that cream-oil on your knotty head, jackets buttoning to your chin so full of white man’s words. Christ God."
Furthermore, Lula accuses Clay of being a criminal: “Clay, you are a murderer and you know that”. She also castigates Clay calling him "Uncle Tom big lip".

Explicitly, Lula criticizes Clay’s outward appearance, his clothes, his hair style and his language because he imitates white people in an attempt to be assimilated into the mainstream American society. Reflecting the writer’s agenda, Lula claims that Clay kills his black self «-you are a murderer”- and black identity by abandoning the cause of his people and their struggle for freedom and equality. In this context, EFL Emirati students with little knowledge about black traditions and the distinguished position of the blues in African-American culture as well as the racial entanglements during the 1960’s in USA are confused by the preceding lines. Moreover, Emirati students fail to understand the racial connotations of the recurring references to “Uncle Tom”- ( In American culture the Uncle Tom character signifies the submissive black slave ) - a symbol of the middle class Negro who is dominated by the slave -master complex. The Emirati students also fail to understand the cultural significance of the allusions to the blues singers "Bessie Smith" and the famous black musician “Bird”- Charlie Parker- as well as the allusions and references to names of famous streets in New York like “East Sixty-Seventh Street” and “Seventh Avenue”.

The Second Category

This category includes culturally-loaded vocabulary associated with American military language and integral to American war novels. Obviously, the American army, particularly the navy, has a long history of terms and phrases which constitute its own corpus of military language. With a sense of irony, soldiers and sailors have developed vocabulary structures that seem to be official in form, nevertheless, their actual meaning is truly slang (Soboleva 1997 : 259). Soldiers, in Vietnam War novels, for example, routinely use long phrases, titles, abbreviations and nick names with connotations outside the reach of EFL Emirati students. Furthermore, American war novels, in general are characterized by the use of ambiguous and abstract military language loaded with connotations unfamiliar to EFL learners. In “politics and the English language”, George Orwell discusses the use of political/military language in Vietnam War novels. He refers to a language which consists of “euphemism, question-begging and sheer cloudy vagueness”. According to Orwell, the use of the lexical item, “pacification”, for example in a Vietnam war text means that “defenseless villages are bombarded from the air, the inhabitants driven out into the countryside, the cattle machine-gunned, the huts set on fire with incendiary bullets”. Orwell points out that vocabulary structures such as “transfer of population” or “rectification of frontiers” have the following collocations: “Millions of peasants are robbed of their farms and sent trudging along roads with no more than they can carry”. Finally, Orwell illustrates that the use of the statement “elimination of unreliable elements” in the context of Vietnam war novels signifies that “people are imprisoned for years without trial or shot in the back the neck or sent to die of scurvy in Arctic labor camps” (Orwell 1972 : 153).

In a related context, Erich Fromm argues that “all governments try, in the case of war, to awaken among their own people the feeling that the enemy is not human” (Fromm 1973 : 145). This destruction of the humanity of the enemy reaches a peak with enemies of another
race. One does not call them by their names but they are usually called by a humiliating term. The texts of Vietnam War novels incorporate vocabulary items identifying the Vietnamese enemies as “slope heads”, “dinks”, “slants”, “slopes” and “zips”. These vocabulary items or what Thomas Merton calls “the linguistic garbage” (Merton 1969: 99) complicated the texts of American war literature. The culturally loaded vocabulary used by Vietnam War writers’ aims to obscure the horror of war substituting the real language of trauma with a pattern of camouflaged lexical items. These items not only reduce the war to a pattern of symbols, signs and metaphors but also prevent EFL students from coming to terms with the Vietnam War fiction as a literature of trauma. The attempt of the authors to camouflage the brutality of war by incorporating ambiguous vocabulary structures dehumanizes the language of the fictional texts. For example, the enemy (Viet Cong) areas were “pacified” not “destroyed” and the term “genocide” was replaced by the phrase “free fire Zones”. After the “bombing pauses” strategy which was ironically part of president Johnson’s peace initiative, Vietnamese citizens were sent to refugee camps in order to “sanitize” the area. Consequently, American troops went out to “sweep and clean” the Vietnamese dirt…etc. Confronting this kind of discourse as well as other selected culturally / linguistically loaded vocabulary items and military slang in fictional texts about war EFL Emirati students found enormous challenge in their attempt to analyze literary texts. Students also encounter other vocabulary items with ambiguous cultural significations in American war novel texts as follows:

1. **Bird:** Literary, the winged animal. In military language, it means an aircraft, plane or helicopter.
2. **Brass:** Literary, the yellow metal made up of copper and zinc, which is used to manufacture buttons and medals worn by high ranking officers. In reference to these brass parts of the uniforms, enlisted men/women refer to «officers" as “brass”.
3. **Dove:** Literary, a kind of pigeon. In the biblical book of Genesis, the dove is a symbol of peace. In military language, it refers to a person who not only looks for peace but also is against the establishment of the military.
4. **Fubar:** The literary meaning of the word is obscene while the acronym itself is socially acceptable. In military and youth slang, it means “mess”.
5. **Hawk:** Literary, a bird of prey. The term means someone with warlike attitudes.
6. **Huey:** This word is originated during the Vietnam War and it means a helicopter. Its use is perpetuated by movies and novels about that war.
7. **To rock out:** Literary, it means to sway or vibrate violently or cause to shake. In military language, it means to fail in an operation or task.
8. **Snafu:** The literary meaning is obscene but the acronym is accepted socially. In military language , it means “a mess” particularly “a bureaucratic mess”
9. **Zero:** Literary, it means a number. In military contexts, it refers to army officers. The term originated from the letter “0” which is an abbreviation for "officer".

**The Third Category**

It includes a variety of vocabulary structures and lexical components which gradually becomes part of youth speech, criminal terminology and street colloquialism. It is significant to argue in this respect that the process of word formations and shifts of meaning -that takes place in standard American English- happens more rapidly in slang systems. With the
passage of time, this category of slang idioms and popular vocabulary turns into a productive system influencing the development of contemporary American language in general. Further, the study of culturally-loaded vocabulary usage reveals that slang lexical items and expressions penetrate from one social sphere into another - including the literary canon - to be settled into standard American language. Constituting a dynamic aspect of American English such culturally-loaded slang structures come from different groups at all levels of population, therefore, they recur in fictional texts and literary works. EFL students unfamiliar with the cultural connotations of lexical slang items, proliferated in contemporary American literature, encounter difficulties in understanding these texts. Literary works in which youth slang interacts with street language and criminal expressions are almost incomprehensible to a considerable number of EFL students who graduated from public secondary schools where English and American fictional texts are not part of the English language curriculum. The following list - incomprehensible to EFL Emirati students- includes examples of criminal terminology and street argot, disseminated in modern American literary texts:

1. Bad: Literary, it means "not good". The slang meaning is the opposite: good or great. To distinguish between the literal and the slang meaning of the word, the latter is pronounced with a longer “A”.
2. Blood: Literary, it means the fluid produced in the heart to be circulated throughout the body. The term means a friend or a relative.
3. Hot: It means aggressive and violent. For example, a “hot” situation means a situation involving police and guns.
4. To chill out: As a slang term it means "to calm down and become passive".
5. Dis: This slang prefix means "to treat someone badly or with disrespect".
6. Dope: Literary, it means narcotics. In slang language, the term means all kinds of fun.
7. To go down: Literary, it means to descend. As a slang term it occurs in reference to an illegal activity. Example: the drug deal goes down at midnight.
9. Jack: A euphemism for “shit” but not as profane as the word "shit". “Jack” is never used as a lone explicative. Example: “to be worth jack” means to be worthless.
10. Joint: Literary, it means «a low class establishment". As a slang lexical item, it has two meanings: prison or / and a cigarette made of marijuana.
11. Junkie: It has no literary meaning. As slang it means a person dedicated to drugs. It extends to suggest people dedicated to anything but the term refers to narcotics.
12. The Man: Literary, it means a person. But as a slang term, it means the following: an important person, the white status quo, the aristocracy, the institution, and white people collectively (by blacks).
13. Pig: Literary, it is a barnyard animal. As a slang term, it is used as a derogatory name for "a police officer".
15. Rock: Literary, it means a stone. As a slang term it means crack, a highly addictive form of cocaine.
16. Rumble: Literary, it means «to shake". Its slang meaning is "to fight".
Moreover, the following list includes examples of youth slang deployed in contemporary American fictional literature and considered as obstacles confronting EFL Emirati student:

1. **Babe**: Literary, it means an infant. As a slang term, it means any woman especially an attractive one.
2. **Bail**: Literary it means to parachute out of a plane. As a slang term it means to get out abruptly from an undesirable situation.
3. **The bird**: The slang meaning of the term is an obscene gesture given by extending and showing the middle finger of the right or the left hand.
4. **Bogus**: Literary it means a sham. As a slang term it is used as an expletive to express dislike.
5. **Chick**: Literary it means a young bird. As a slang term it means an attractive female.
6. **Chillum**: It comes from chill and it means relaxing.
7. **Cool**: It means good, nothing to worry about, no problem.
8. **Cut**: It means a strong and muscular person.
9. **Dog**: It means an extremely unattractive person or someone of poor character.
10. **Dude**: Literary it means a dandy. As a slang term it is a form of address similar to a friend.
11. **Geek**: A socially unacceptable person. The stereotypical geek wears glasses and operates computers.
12. **Jillion**: It means a virtually unaccountable number but it lacks numeric value.
13. **Put down**: To belittle someone.
14. **Put off**: To reject someone.
15. **To Rock**: To have fun, to be funny, to dance
16. **Shades**: It means a pair of sunglasses or dark glasses.
17. **Stoned**: Literary it means to be killed by stoning. It means to be high under the influence of alcohol or narcotics.
18. **Strung out**: To be paranoid or extremely sick due to an over use of narcotics.
19. **Stud**: Literary a male animal kept for breeding. As a slang term it means a man who has a way with women, a Don Juan.
20. **To Suck**: It means bad. It is often used with the word shit. Example: this soccer match sucks shit. It is very regular when used with the word "slut".
21. **Wicked**: Literary it means mischievous or malicious. Its slang meaning is good or excellent.

**Conclusion**

On the basis of the preceding argument, it is noteworthy to point out that linguistically loaded vocabulary and socio-cultural components, embedded in the semantic structure of a language, are part and parcel of English and American literary texts. When used in fictional contexts, these vocabulary elements convey additional allocations which transcend their original lexical meaning. Obviously, these linguistically-culturally loaded vocabulary items including slang structures represent a major obstacle for EFL learners unaware of L₂ collocational knowledge. In other words, the extensive proliferation of these lexical elements in contemporary English and American literature obscures the literary texts when approached by EFL learners ignorant of L₂ cultural correlations and linguistic entanglements. Enhancing the awareness of EFL students about the semantic and cultural connotations of L₂ vocabulary
provides a better comprehension of literary texts. An understanding of SL slang patterns and culturally-loaded vocabulary structures inevitably enables Emirati students and other EFL learners to acquire the extra-linguistic aspects of the fictional texts and thereby leads to a proper comprehension of textual and aesthetic elements integral to authorial visions. This process may include the following procedures: An exploration of problematic vocabulary items on the semantic level from a denotative perspective, an investigation of the functions of these lexical structures and word combinations in terms of their contextual connotations and an analysis of the socio-political context in which the literary/fictional text was composed in order to comprehend the authorial intentions behind the connotations involved.
Endnotes


References


