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Mohammed Diab Khalaf AL Azzawi

Amra Ibrahim Sultan

College of Education for Human Sciences, Tikrit University

* Corresponding author: E-mail :
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The Influence of Socio-Cultural Context on the Pragmatic Competence of EFL Secondary School Students in Comprehending Literary Text

ABSTRACT

This study is concerned with investigating the influence of socio-cultural context on strategic and pragmatic competence of EFL secondary school students.

The aims of this study are:

1. Finding out the influence of using socio-cultural context on strategic and pragmatic competence of EFL secondary school students' achievement.
2. finding out whether there is statistical significant difference between the mean score of experimental groups and that of the control group in the posttest in comprehending the

To achieve these aims the following hypotheses are posed:

- 1- There is no statistically significant difference between the mean score of experimental groups and control group by using literary context learning on strategic and pragmatic competence.
- 2- There is statistical significant difference between the means score of the two experimental groups achievement who are taught by using socio-cultural context approach.

Finally some recommendations and suggestions for further studies are put forward.

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أثر السياق الاجتماعي والثقافي على الكفاءة الاستراتيجية والتدولية لدى طلاب اللغة الإنكليزية في المدارس الثانوية في استيعابهم النص الأدبي

محمد ذياب خلف/المديرية العامة لتربية صلاح الدين

عمرة ابراهيم سلطان / كلية التربية للعلوم الانسانية/ جامعة تكريت

الخلاصة:

ان لدراسة النصوص الادبية أثرا اساسيا في تعزيز المهارات اللغوية ورفع الكفاءات الاستيعابية والإدراكية لدى متعلمي اللغة الانكليزية لغة اجنبية والذي يعتمد على تبادل الافكار والمعلومات بين الطلاب .

تهدف الدراسة الى ما يأتي :

١. ايجاد الأثر في تأثير السياق الاجتماعي والثقافي على الكفاءة الاستراتيجية والتداولية لدى طلاب المدارس الثانوية دارسي اللغة الإنكليزية لغة اجنبية .
 ٢. ايجاد فيما اذا كانت هنالك فروقات ذات دلالة إحصائية بين متوسط درجات المجموعتين التجريبيتين والمجموعة الضابطة في الاختبار البعدي.
- وقد افترضت الدراسة عدة فرضيات لتحقيق اهداف الدراسة كما يأتي :
١. هنالك فروق ذات دلالة إحصائية بين متوسط درجات تحصيل المجموعتين التجريبيتين ومتوسط درجات تحصيل المجموعة الضابطة.
 ٢. هنالك فروق ذات دلالة إحصائية بين متوسط درجات تحصيل المجموعتين التجريبيتين والمجموعة الضابطة في الاختبار البعدي .
- تم تحليل البيانات بينت النتائج الآتية :
١. توجد فروق ذات دلالة إحصائية بين الوسط الحسابي في تحصيل المجموعتين التجريبيتين والمجموعة الضابطة في الاختبار البعدي .
 ٢. لقد اثبتت طريقة التدريس المستندة على السياق الاجتماعي والثقافي فاعليتها في تطوير الكفاءة الاستراتيجية والكفاءة التداولية (البراغماتية) لدى طلاب المرحلة الاعدادية في مادة اللغة الإنكليزية واستيعابهم النصوص الادبية .
- وبالاعتماد على نتائج الدراسة الحالية وضعت الاستنتاجات والاقتراحات والتوصيات لدراسات مستقبلية لأثر مجالات البحث الحالي .
- السياق الاجتماعي، الاستراتيجية، التداولية**

Section One

Introduction

1.1 The Statement of Problem and its significance

The concept of socio-cultural context (SCC) suggests instead of existing in isolation, that language is connected to the culture and society in which it is used. But the issue is that most instructors fail to emphasize the significance of socio-cultural context while instructing literary texts, and depends on teaching students new vocabularies, synonyms and grammatical structure by using old teaching methods. These are related to many reasons first the teachers do not have enough time for sociocultural teaching, second teachers do not have enough confidence and finally they usually find many challenges when they are

trying to guide their students to appreciate and understand the meaning of the target language. They need to be aware of the different ways in which pragmatic transfer manifests. It has been observed that many fourth year secondary school students tend to avoid FL communication and may not use the opportunities to use language through authentic communication. The focus has passed to the achievement of the functional abilities in the target language with the final purpose of producing and understanding language that is appropriate to communicative situations in accordance with specific sociocultural parameters. Failure to do so may cause misunderstanding and communication breakdowns.

1.2 Aims of the Study

This study aims at:

- 1- Finding out the influence of using socio-cultural context on pragmatic competence of EFL secondary school student's achievement.
- 2- Finding out whether there is statistical significant difference between the mean score of the experimental and control groups in the posttest.

3- 3 Hypotheses of the Current Study :

- 1- There is no statistical difference at the level of significance 0.05 among the means score of the exp.1 and the exp.2 and the control group achievement.
- 2- There is statistical significant difference between the mean score between experimental groups achievement who taught by using socio-cultural context approach in comprehending poetic devices in the post test.

1.4 The Limits of Study

The Limits of this Study are the following:

- 1- The socio-cultural aspects included in the literary text.
- 2- The fourth secondary school students in Salah- den Governorate.

3- The literary texts of poetry in the " English for Iraq text book" number (4th Preparatory) the academic year 2023-2024.

1.5 Value of the Study

The value of the study can be clarified in the following:

- 1- The study sheds light on the main elements of literary topics in secondary schools; it supports teachers with ideas to be used in teaching such kinds of texts.

1.6 The Plan of the Study

The following steps are followed to serve the purpose of this study and verify its hypotheses.

- 1- Conducting an experiment to find out the influence of socio-cultural context in pragmatic competence to enhance comprehension of poetic texts.
- 2- Selecting randomly a sample of a ninety nine Iraqi secondary school students and dividing them into three equal groups.
- 3- The experimental groups have been taught literary texts by concentration of socio-cultural context whereas the control group has been taught with traditional method.

In the light of the outcomes of the study a, numbers of recommendations and suggestions have been drown.

1-7 Definition of Basic Terms

1.7.1 The Influence

Influence according to (Cambridge Dictionary, 2020) is the capacity to have an effect on the character, development or behavior of someone or something or the effect itself.

The Operational Definition of influence

The changes that happened according to specific condition to give certain Outcomes.

1.7.2 Socio-cultural context

Socio-cultural Context refers to the social and cultural environment in which a person grows and lives and the influence that this exerts on their ideas and behaviors. (Roger,2021).

The Operational Definition

The social process that students have to cope and communicate according to the environment they live in and their cultural traditions .

1.7.4 Pragmatic competence

Bachman (1990, p. 44), defined pragmatic competence as the “acceptability of utterances within specific context of language use, and rules determining the successful use language within specified contexts”.

The Operational Definition

Strategic competence refers to strategies learner's use during the course of communication to bridge a gap in their linguistics knowledge embraces all aspects of assessment ,explaining and execution of communicative tasks (Bachman, 2018) .

1.7.4 Comprehension

Comprehension is ability to understanding and interpreting the meaning of the text and to integrate with all components the reader already knows (Richards & Schmidt ,2010).

The Operational definition

It means the know the intension of using language .

1.7.5 Literary texts:

Literary texts describe any passage chosen any kinds of literature that is poetic and calls for interpretation. (Alene, 2014).

Section Two

Theoretical Background and the Previous Studies

2.1 The Socio-cultural Theory

Socio-cultural theory (SCT) were first applied by vygotsky and his collaborators in Russian during 1920s and 1930s who created anew and comprehensive approach to human psychological process . It focused on the thought that human activities take place in social context and culture arbitrated by language and can be understood when an individual development comprising higher mental operational functioning in social sources . (Miller ,2011).

2.1-1 The Model of Socio-Cultural Context Approach

The Adopted Model in this study related to Vygotsky's (1970) which emphasizes the critical importance of social interaction in the growth of students' strategic and pragmatic capacity for creating and constructing meaning.

2.1.2 The Principles of Socio-cultural Theory

. This theory depends on some essential principles as following :

2.1.3 Zone of Proximal Development

The Zone of Proximal Development (ZPD) is the difference between what a learner can do without help and what they can do with help .

2.1.4 Mediation

A mediator is typically a person who is neutral and tasked with resolving a problem between opposing parties.(Fraser ,2006).

2.1.5 Regulation

According to (Lantolf and thorn, 2006) by participating in physical and mental activities in which their activity is mostly dependent on others, such as teachers, peers, and parents .

2.1.6 Internalization

internalization occurs when a person's cognitive growth is influenced by society and they accept the morals and ethics of a group for themselves.

2.3 Pragmatics Competence

Pragmatics competency is defined by (Crysal and Kasper, 1996) as the knowledge a person must possess or what the individual needs to know in order to communicate successfully and effectively in a certain setting. Invoking the distinction between locutionary and illocutionary acts requires making clear the distinction between what is being said and the intended meaning (Searle, 1985).

2.4 Pragmatic Competence and Language Usage

Bachman's model of language competence is separated into two strands. Organizational skills include both organizational and textual skills, while pragmatics skills include illocutionary and sociolinguistics skills as shown in Figure (8) Components of language competence (Bachman, 1990, p.87) .

2.5 The Components of Pragmatic Competence

Pragmatics competence includes two essential components as follow :

2.5.1 Illocutionary competence

It concerns with the “ performance of language functions and speech act where the actual words imply a different meaning from the stated one” (Davidson and Flucher, 2007, p. 44).

2.5.2 Sociolinguistic Competence

Sociolinguistic competence is defined as the awareness of or control over language usage conventions that are governed by the characteristics of the particular language's use context that are concerned with culture and social norms. . (Bachman,1990).

Section Three

Methodology

3-1- The Experimental Design

Creswell (2012) defines the experimental design as the traditional method to conduct quantitative analysis or evaluate a concept or procedures to determine whether it has an effect on result or a dependent variables.

Table (1)

The Experimental Design

Stage	Groups	Test	Independent Variable	Dependent Variable	Posttest
Fourth Secondary	EG1 EG2	Pre-test	Socio-cultural Context	Achievement in English Subject	Students' Achievement
	CG	Pre-test	The communicative method which is stated in the teacher guide	Achievement in English Subject	Students' Achievement

3-2 The population and Sample Selection of the Study

Best and Kahn (2006:13) mention that population is a group of individuals with at least one common characteristic that distinguishes the group from other individuals .Also according to the definition of (Richard & Schmidt ,2010) .

No (2) .

Table (2)

Population and Sampling of Students

Population of Students	Pilot Study	Group	Sample No	Percentage
١١٦٠	٤٠	EG1	33	٤.4 %
		EG2	33	
		CG	33	
		Total	٩٩	

3-3 Equalization of Tree Groups

3-3-1 Age of the Students

The students' age in months for the two groups are counted till the first of January 2023 to find out whether there is any difference between their ages, as shown in appendix (A). To determine whether or not there are significant differences between the mean scores of the three groups in terms of their ages, a one-way analysis of variance (ANOVA) is also used.

Table (3)

One-Way Analysis of Variance (ANOVA) of Students' Age

Groups	N	Mean	Std. D	F-value		DF	Sig.
				Calculated	Tabulated		
E.G (1)	33	191.5455	4.43065	0.326	3.10	2	0.05
E.G (2)	33	191.8788	4.25557			96	
C.G	33	191.0303	4.20925			98	

The table (4) shows that the calculated F-value value (0.326) is less than the tabulated F-value (3.10) at the (0.05) level of significance and DF = 2, 96. This means that the students of the three groups are equal in their age.

٣.3.2 The Attainment of Fathers

The chi-square calculation was used to determine whether or not there was a statistically significant difference in educational level among the fathers of the students who participated in the study. Following analysis, the calculated value (6.030) was found to be lower than the tabulated value (21.026), with (2) degree of freedom and a level of significance (0.05). This indicate that there is no statistically significant difference among the three groups in terms of fathers' educational level and they are equivalent in the variable of their fathers' educational level as illustrated by the table (5).

Table (4)
The Chi-Square Value of Fathers' Educational Level

Level of Education	Group			Total	Chi-Square Value		DF	Level of Significance
	EG. 1	EG. 2	CG.		Calculated	Tabulated		
Higher Studies	2	1	3	6	6.030	21.026	2	0.05
Bachelor	7	10	6	23				
Diploma	6	2	4	12				
Secondary	5	8	7	20				
Intermediate	3	5	4	12				
Primary	6	4	6	16				
Illiterate	4	3	3	10				
Total	33	33	33	99				

3-3-3 Mothers' Attainment

The educational levels of the mothers in both groups are found to be equal. The calculated value is (3.224), which is lower than the tabulated value (21.026) at degree of freedom (12) and the level of significance (0.05). This indicate that there is no statistically significant difference between the three groups with regard to this variable (6).

Table (5)
The Chi-Square Value of the Mothers' Education Level

Level of Education	Group			Total	Chi-Square Value		D F	Level of Significance
	EG . 1	EG . 2	CG .		Calculated	Tabulated		
Higher Studies	2	3	2	7	3.224	21.026	12	0.05
Bachelor	7	5	7	19				

Diploma	5	6	3	14				
Secondary	6	7	5	18				
Intermediate	5	4	6	15				
Primary	5	6	6	17				
Illiterate	3	2	4	9				
Total	33	33	33	99				

3-3-4 Students' achievement at Previous Schooling Year (2022-2023)

Students' achievement in the final exam of English during the previous academic year (2022-2023) one-way ANOVA is also used. By using one-way analysis of variance to analyses the data, as can be seen in the table that follows:

Table (6)
One-Way Analysis of Variance (ANOVA) for the Students Previous Year Scores in English

Groups	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	F-value		DF	Sig.
				Calculated	Tabulated		
E.G (R)	33	65.3030	14.10781	0.062	3.10	2	0.05
E.G (F.S)	33	64.6061	12.89123			96	
C.G	33	65.7576	13.06482			98	

The table (7) shows that the calculated F-value value (0.062) is less than the tabulated F-value (3.10) at the (0.05) level of significance and DF = 2 . This means that the students of the three groups are equal in their previous year degrees in English.

3-3-4 Students' Scores in the Pre-test

According to (Lado,1977) point of view the pre-test of teaching should be used to equate the three groups because the amount of pre-test knowledge is an important factor ; therefor the pre-test has been conducted for equalization (see table (8) .

Table (7)
The T-Test Value of the Two Groups in the Pre-test

Groups	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	F-value		DF	Sig.
				Calculated	Tabulated		
E.G (1)	33	47.8182	10.69595	0.020	3.10	2	0.05
E.G (2)	33	47.7576	10.47924			96	
C.G	33	48.2424	11.21670			98	

The table (8) shows that the Calculated F-value value (0.020) is less than the tabulated F-value (3.10) at the (0.05) level of significance and DF = 2 . This means that the students of the three groups are equal in their previous year degrees in English.

3- 3-5 Reliability of the Posttest

Reliability is an important characteristic of a good test. A test is said to be reliable if its degree of accuracy stays stable and consistent each time it is conducted under the same conditions for the same sample of students (Veram and Beard, 1981:860).

3-5-1 Construction of the Study Instruments

٣ .5.2 Test Construction

The test questions are constructed to find out the influence of sociocultural context of EFL secondary school students' on pragmatic competence in comprehending the literary texts of the four English poetry poems (*The Lady of Shalott* , *When you are old* , *Secret of Fire* and *Love Songs of Words*).

(8)

The Specification Categorization of the Test

Question N0	Types	No. of Items	Category	Total Scores
١	Short answer questions	٥	Subjective	١٥
٢	Short answer	٥	Subjective	١٥

	questions			
٣	Fill in the blanks	٥	Subjective	١٥
٤	Multiple choice	٥	Objective	١٥
٥	True \False statements	١٠	Objective	٢٠
٦	Essay\Compositions writing	١	Subjective	٢٠
Total		٣١		١٠٠

3- 5

Alderson and Wall (2010) defines discrimination power as " the degree to which a particular item's result correspond with the results of the entire test ". It means measuring the extent to which the results of an individual item correlated with the results of whole test.

The test item discrimination power was found to have a range of (0.30) - (0.70). The test items for DP and DL are shown in the following table (10):

Table (9)
Difficulty level and Discrimination power

Question	Item	Higher	Lower	Difficulty	Discrimination
Q1	1	30	21	0.45	0.30
	2	30	18	0.33	0.40
	3	27	18	0.35	0.30
	4	27	15	0.56	0.40
	5	24	12	0.60	0.40
Q2	1	27	17	0.50	0.33
	2	27	14	0.45	0.43
	3	24	14	0.55	0.33
	4	20	10	0.54	0.33

	5	19	8	0.66	0.37
Q3	1	30	21	0.31	0.30
	2	28	15	0.46	0.43
	3	26	14	0.32	0.40
	4	20	10	0.51	0.33
	5	21	10	0.35	0.37
Q4	1	28	18	0.55	0.33
	2	28	13	0.40	0.50
	3	24	15	0.70	0.30
	4	22	8	0.35	0.47
	5	18	6	0.55	0.40
Q5	1	20	12	0.56	0.40
	2	20	10	0.43	0.50
	3	18	12	0.46	0.30
	4	16	8	0.63	0.40
	5	16	4	0.71	0.60
	6	14	6	0.54	0.40
	7	18	4	0.59	0.70
	8	15	6	0.31	0.45
	9	12	4	0.46	0.40
	10	10	2	0.50	0.40
Q6	1	194	88	0.51	0.53

3- 5.4 Test Scoring Scheme

Thissen (2015) . mention that test score is a summary of the evidence contained in an examinee's responses to the items of a test that are related to the construct that being measured .

٣.6 Statistical Means

The statistical tools which have been utilized in the present study to analyze the collection that is, as follows:

1. T-test for Two Independent Samples is used to find out the significance between the two groups in the equalization of age and literature scores. It is also used to find out the significance of differences between the two groups in the posttest.

2. Chi²: It is
$$t = \frac{\bar{X}_1 - \bar{X}_2}{\sqrt{\left(\frac{(N_1 - 1)S_1^2 + (N_2 - 1)S_2^2}{N_1 + N_2 - 2} \right) \left(\frac{1}{N_1} + \frac{1}{N_2} \right)}}$$
 used to find out the significance of differences in the variable of parent's education.

3. Difficulty Level: It is used to measure the difficulty level of the posttest items (for recognition)

4. Discrimination Power: It is used to measure the discrimination power of the test items.

$$D = \frac{T_u - T_i}{(n)^{\frac{1}{2}}/s}$$

Section Four

Analysis of Results & Discussions

4.0 An Introductory Note:

In order to fulfill the aims of this study and verify the hypotheses, the results of the test are analyzed in such a way to find out the extent to which preparatory students' performed are developed.

4-1 Presentation of Results

Relevant to the aims and hypothesis of the study , the following

Results have been drawn from the analysis data .

4-1-1- Results related to the First Aim

The first aim of the study is to " Find out the influence of socio-cultural context on strategic and pragmatic competence in comprehending literary text" As shown in the following table:

Table (11)
One-Way Analysis of Variance (ANOVA) Between the three Groups

Variables	Sum of Squares	DF	Mean Square	F-value		Sig.
				Calculated	Tabulated	
Between Groups	3642.081	2	1821.040	12.779	3.10	0.05
Within Groups	13680.000	96	142.500			
Total	17322.081	98				

The obtained results shows that the calculated F-value (12.779) is higher than the tabulated F-value (3.13) at the (0.05) level of significance and DF = (2, 96). This indicates that there are significant differences among students mean scores in the post-test.

Table (12)
Comparisons of Means According to (Scheffe^a)

Groups	N	Subset for alpha = 0.05	
		1	2
C.G	33	58.1515	
E.G (1)	33		70.6061
E.G (2)	33		71.3939
Sig.		1.000	0.965

According to these results, since the mean score of control group is (58.1515), whereas 1st experimental group is (70.6061), this indicates that there is a

significant difference between the achievement of the two groups in the post-test and in favour of 1st experimental group. So , since the mean scores of 2nd experimental group is (71.3939), while the control group is (58.1515). This indicates that there is a significant difference between the achievement of the two groups in the post-test and in the favour of the 2nd experimental group.

4 -1-2 Results related to the Second Aims

Related to the obtain results and since the mean scores of 1st experimental group is (70.6061), while 2nd experimental group is (71.3939). This indicates that there is no significant difference between the achievement of the two groups in the post-test. So, this hypothesis is rejected .

Table (14)

One-Way Analysis of Variance (ANOVA) Between five Rubrics of Writing Skill

Variables	Sum of Squares	DF	Mean Square	F-value		Sig.
				Calculated	Tabulated	
Between Groups	4.727	4	1.182	0.980	2.43	0.05
Within Groups	192.909	160	1.206			
Total	197.636	164				

The table (14) shows that the calculated F-value value (33.329) is higher than the tabulated F-value (2.45) at the (0.05) level of significance and DF = (4, 120). This indicates that there is no significant difference between 2nd Experimental group mean scores of Iraqi EFL preparatory school students at Poetic Devices. So, this hypothesis is rejected also.

Discussion of Results

4-2-1 Related to the first aim

The results of statistical means which is used in the study (ANOVA and Sheffee) indicate that using socio-cultural context of learning has a great effect on experimental groups in developing strategic and pragmatic competence .

4-2-2 Results related to the second aim

The results indicate that there is no statistical significant difference between the mean scores of the two groups .

Section Five

Conclusions , Recommendation and Suggestions for Further Studies

5.0 Introductory Notes

This chapter discusses the conclusions , recommendation and suggestions for further studies .

5.1 Conclusions

In the light of the results of the current study the following conclusions are drawn :

- 1- Using socio-cultural context approach plays an efficient role in improving secondary school students' achievement in comprehending literary text of English .
- 2- The finding revealed that socio-cultural context as a new approach is effective in enhancing students' achievement in the English language ,that means teaching literary text by using this approach affect students' performance positively .
- 3- Socio-cultural approach is efficient in facilitating comprehension of the poetic devices in the poems and it assists to expand the students imagination capacity .

5-2 Recommendations

This study puts forward the following recommendations :

- 1- Since the socio-cultural context approach has improved students' achievement in comprehending the literary text of poetry , it is recommended to give more importance to this approach in teaching EFL in the new Iraqi curriculum of English for Iraq .
- 2- Teachers of EFL should be trained in the employment of SCA for teaching various lessons activities and exercises .

5 – 3 Suggestion for Further Studies

Since this study is only conducted on teaching poetry of preparatory school students , a similar research can be applied in teaching another literary text of drama and short stories .

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Appendix

The Test

Q1- Answer the Following questions carefully . (20. marks)

1 - What are the social and cultural aspects that helps students to understand old and modern poems ?

2 - What are the socio -cultural factors that the poet W B Yeats used in the poem of " When you are old "

3- Mentions some of the poetic images the poets used in the poem of

..... 4- What are the essential themes the " For the Sake of Our Homeland " .

5-What are the important values the readers should know before they are reading any literary text?

Q2 : Answer to the following questions about the poetic devices which used in the poems (20.marks).

1 – What are the reason of using **personification** examples in literature?

.....

2 – Why the poet need to use **simile** and **metaphor** expressions in the poems?

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3- Explains how the **symbolism** images in literary text can enhance or alert its meaning ? Provide an example

4- What are the effect of using **repetition** questions in the poem ?

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5- What is the reason behind using **imagery** thoughts in the literary text?

Q3 – Read the passage carefully and answer the appropriate choice to the following. (20. marks)

One day in a quaint village nestled between rolling hills , Emily discovered an amazing ancient tome in the dusty attic of her grandfather's cottage . The book filled with folklore and traditions passed through generations , transported Emily to a world where every gesture and word held a deeper meaning shaped by cultural tapestry of her ancestors. She felt something changed in her life after reading the book ;therefor she decided to tell her nearest friend Sally to read it .

1 - What is the setting of the passage ?

- A- a seaside town
- B- bustling city
- C- mountainous region

2 – What does the ancient tome discovered by Emile contain ?

- A- Cooking recipes
- B- Historical records

C- Folklore and traditions

3- How does the cultural context influence Emile's experience with the book ?

A- It confuses her interpretation

B- It makes the text irrelevant

C- It deepens her connection to the text

4- What did Emile's impression when she read the book?

A- She was hesitant

B- Moved her passion

C- Dislike the content

5- The book that Emile discovered transported her to a another world because it includes ?

A- magic devices

B- ambiguous meaning

C- unreal expressions

Q4 Tick True or False to the following questions. (20 . Marks)

1- Literature can change the way we think about life because it can transform attitudes and values.

2 – There is an evidence that people who read poetry with socio-cultural context are better at understanding other people .

3 – Cultural awareness is only important when studying non-western literature .

4 –Socio –cultural context has no impact on how literary text is interpreted .

5 – If you do not have enough knowledge about the poet's background you will comprehend the poem better .

Q6 – Write an essay or composition about the following topic .(20.Marks).

Describe the habits and traditions in Islamic countries during Ramadan .

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