



**Universitat**  
de les Illes Balears

**MASTER'S THESIS:**

**A PEDAGOGICAL PROPOSAL TO ENHANCE THE  
INTERCULTURAL COMPETENCE THROUGH  
AUTHENTIC LITERARY TEXTS IN THE EFL  
CLASSROOM**

**Name Surname(s): Holly Merrydew Ross Novak.**

**Master's Degree in Formació del Professorat.**

**(Specialisation: Anglès i Alemany)**

**Centre for Postgraduate Studies**

**Academic Year 2019-20**

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**Abstract**

This dissertation aims to help develop Intercultural Competence through a series of pedagogical proposals using fragments from literary works of authors from Anglophone countries for EFL students in secondary centres in the Balearic Islands. The activities will be based on the principles of different theoretical perspectives of IC and literature in the EFL classroom. The choice of texts for the activities will help students discuss themes such as immigration, prejudice and discrimination, all social issues that we face in an ever growing globalized world.

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## 1. Introduction

Intercultural competence (henceforth IC) is considered to be an essential skill to be developed in language learners, bearing in mind the globalized world that we live in and the importance of being a plurilingual European citizen established in the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages (CEFR). Moreover, the Balearic Islands have become a melting pot due to mass migration and superdiversity; some may fear that the arrival of foreign cultures may inflict negatively upon the local culture, but this is where intercultural competence comes in hand, because being intercultural does not mean that one dismisses one's own culture, but becomes more empathetic and respectful towards other cultures, trying to understand and interpret them from an insider's point of view, and at the same time becoming more critically aware of one's own culture by contrasting with others. However, as Sercu (2005) affirms, IC is not given the attention it deserves in the current English as a Foreign Language (henceforth EFL) classroom. Teachers tend to prioritise language skills in Foreign Language (henceforth FL) education, however motivating pupils to be open-minded and critical, while also empathetic and tolerant, and to question and analyse stereotypes, are also important communicative skills. Authentic literary texts can work as a medium to immerse oneself in another's universe, meaning the reader can place herself in another person's shoes. For a moment we can feel what another person feels and understand his/her worldview, even if we do not necessarily agree with it.

To help secondary students become more intercultural, a series of activities have been created around the analysis of authentic fictional texts which take place in Anglophone countries from a multicultural outlook, grounded on the principles of several theoretical perspectives of the benefits of promoting IC and using literature in the EFL classroom.

## 1.1 Justification

I believe that understanding diversity is a key concept of IC, and due to the colonial past of Great Britain the English language has adapted to many cultures and mindsets. The main source for the creation of the activities is the novel *Small Island*, by Andrea Levy. The reason I selected this novel is due to the historical context of the novel, England and Jamaica during the Second World War, and the themes portrayed which include racial prejudice and discrimination, immigration and the colonial discourse in the construction of identity based on social hierarchy. Through the voices of the first person narrators, students will also be able to grasp the idea that English is a global language, although with varieties, in this case British and Jamaican English. The other source for the last section of activities is the short story "American History" by J. Ortiz Cofer, which takes place in the United States and also portrays the theme of prejudice, here through the eyes of teenage girl with Puerto Rican origins. The experiences of the characters evince the intercultural world that we live in and the obstacles that many people encounter due to their origins and ancestry. According to the GOIB the Balearic Islands have 14,4% of foreign students, this is the highest percentage of all the autonomous regions. Europa press (2020) states that public primary schools and secondary schools include in their innovation plans organizational, methodological and didactic proposals to contribute to the intercultural integration of their educational communities, "especially those centers that have a higher percentage of foreign students in their enrollment " (para. 6). Therefore, promoting IC in the EFL classroom can be a means to help integrate foreign students and make the native students more empathetic and tolerant towards other cultures.

## **1.2 objectives**

The objective of this dissertation is to create activities for upper-secondary EFL classes using multicultural English literature to enhance IC, based on the theoretical perspectives of several scholars. The study of these theoretical perspectives aim at helping teachers with practical pedagogical proposals showing how they can enhance IC through literature in a series of staged activities. These activities are thought to be implemented in the Balearic Islands' secondary centres' EFL classroom.

## **2. Literature review**

The literature review will explore the relevant literature that examines the teaching of culture, IC and the use of literary texts as a medium to enhance IC in the field of FL education. As well as focusing on some methodology that can be used to apply to pedagogical proposals to enhance IC through literature. The last section will justify how fiction can reduce prejudiced and discriminatory beliefs while promoting IC, as understanding diversity and moving towards the inclusion of people's diverse backgrounds are key factors of IC.

### **2.1 Teaching culture in Foreign Language education.**

Kramsch (1993) describes that culture is often treated as the expendable fifth skill of foreign language teaching, the other four skills (speaking, listening, reading and writing) are given more relevance for the development of the communicative and linguistic competence. Teaching culture becomes challenging because it is ambiguous; it challenges one's world view and can even make communication become an uncomfortable experience.

When culture is introduced in the FL classroom, it is usually to provide information about daily life and routines of the target language. This reflects the extended belief that teachers usually define culture teaching in terms of passing on knowledge instead of encouraging intercultural skills or promoting learners' abilities to analyse their own culture and identity while also relating it to foreign cultures (Sercu, 2005, p.37). The results from Sercu's (2005) study show that this finding is particularly true for teaching practices in Spain.

Therefore, if elements of culture are incorporated in the EFL classroom, the subject matter are contents of *surface culture* (Hinkel, 2001) or explicit culture (Shaules, 2007) "such as holidays, food, landmarks, and great achievements of important people, which only represent the observable, well-recognized, and static icons of native and the target cultures" (Gómez, 2018, p.155). These emblematic and perceivable forms of culture do not prepare EFL learners to handle intercultural relationships. The intercultural competence involves facing elements of *deep culture* "such as social behaviors and norms, lifestyles, politeness, as well as personal and collective ideologies about values, class, race, gender, money, education, work, and human rights, which can either produce positive intercultural experiences (understanding and tolerance), or negative experiences (conflict, confusion, and culture shock) in actual communication" (Gómez, 2018, p.155). As reflected in Sercu's (2005) study, the teaching of these elements of *deep culture* is no easy task; in many cases the absence of useful resources, impediments of the national educational curriculum, lack of time for designing one's own didactic materials, preference for linguistic teaching and the FL teachers own limitations of notions of culture inhibit this objective. However, education is moving slowly but surely towards the reshaping of traditional teaching practices to prepare pupils for the intercultural world that surrounds us.



## 2.2 Intercultural Competence (IC) in Foreign Language Education

Learning a foreign language is, by definition, an intercultural process. It is expected that FL teachers should go beyond the linguistic and communicative objectives of language learning and promote the acquisition of IC in their pupils (Sercu, 2005, p.2). From a theoretical point of view, it is challenging to give a clear and distinct definition to the concept of IC. However, Byram's (1997) model of Intercultural Communicative Competence (ICC) has been very significant and influential in the discipline of FL teaching. According to Byram, Nichols & Stevens (2009) ICC is “the ability to interact with ‘others,’ to accept other perceptions of the world, to mediate between different perspectives, (and) to be conscious of their evaluations of difference” (p.5).

In the literature, diverse models of IC have been conceptualized (e.g., Byram, 1997, 2000; Byram & Feng, 2004; Byram & Zarate, 1994). Hoff (2016) states that from Byram's standpoint (1997, 2000, 2009), “the model presents the qualities of a competent “intercultural speaker” who acts as a mediator between different worldviews in order to establish mutual respect and understanding” (p.444). ICC is defined in terms of five abilities (*savoirs*); this conceptual framework makes up the knowledge, skills and attitudes which form the intercultural competence (Byram, M. 2009, p.323) and defines “the intercultural speaker”; these are:

- 1) **Intercultural attitudes** (*savoir être*): showing curiosity and openness, readiness to suspend disbelief about other cultures and belief about one's own.
- 2) **Knowledge** (*savoirs*): about social groups and the processes, practices, and products of their cultures in one's own and the interlocutor's country
- 3) **Skills of interpreting and relating** (*savoir comprendre*): the ability to interpret a document or event from another culture, to explain it and relate it to documents or events from one's own.
- 4) **Skills of discovery and interaction** (*savoir apprendre/faire*): ability to acquire new knowledge of a culture and cultural practices and the ability to operate knowledge, attitudes and skills under the constraints of real-time

communication and interaction.

5) **Critical cultural awareness** (*savoir s'engager*): an ability to evaluate, critically and on the basis of explicit criteria, perspectives, practices and products in one's own and other cultures and countries.

Figure 1 below represents the multi-componential model of ICC proposed by Byram (2000, 2009) representing the components of ICC and the interrelationships among the components.

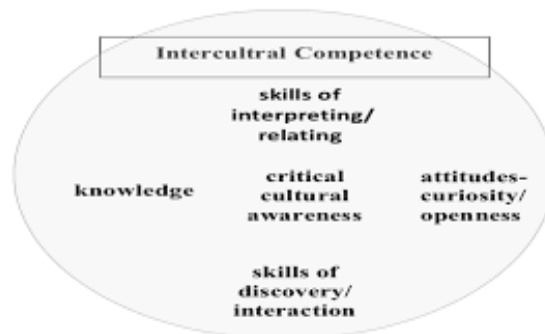


Figure 1. A Model of Intercultural Communicative Competence Components.  
Reprinted from The intercultural speaker and the pedagogy of foreign language education, by M. Byram, 2009, p.323.

In FL education, the intercultural competence is often linked to the communicative competence in the foreign language that is being learned. According to the Council of Europe, “a learner's ability to act in a foreign language in a linguistically, sociolinguistically and pragmatically appropriate way is Communicative competence” (Sercu, 2005, p3.). Moreover, Sercu et al (2005) represent the different components of IC from Byram’s conceptual framework (1997) in three categories: Knowledge, Skills/behaviour and Attitudes/traits. (see Table 1).

Table1. Components of Intercultural Competence.

<b>Knowledge</b>	<b>Skills/behaviour</b>	<b>Attitudes/traits</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Culture specific and culture general knowledge</li> <li>• Knowledge of self and other</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Ability to interpret and relate <i>Savoir-comprendre</i></li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Attitude to relativize self and</li> </ul>

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Knowledge of interaction: individual and societal</li> <li>• Insight regarding the ways in which culture affects language and communication <i>Savoirs</i></li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Ability to discover and/or interact</li> <li>• Ability to acquire new knowledge and to operate knowledge, attitudes and skills under the constraints of real-time communication and interaction</li> <li>• Metacognitive strategies to direct own learning <i>Savoir-apprendre / savoirs-faire</i></li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• value others</li> <li>• Positive disposition towards learning intercultural competence <i>Savoir-être</i></li> <li>• General disposition characterized by a critical engagement with the foreign culture under consideration and one's own <i>Savoir-s'engager</i></li> </ul>
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Note. Reprinted from Foreign language teachers and intercultural competence: An international investigation, by Sercu et al. (2005). Copyright 2005 by the Cromwell Press

According to Byram (2000), the intercultural speaker is able “to see relationships between different cultures—both internal and external to a society—and to mediate, that is interpret each in terms of the other, either for (himself) or for other people”. He also knows how to “critically or analytically understand that one’s own and other cultures’ perspective is culturally determined rather than natural” (p.10). However, Hoff (2017) points out that scholars have found that in recent years, despite Byram’s undeniable influence in the literature of IC, Byram’s model does not adequately reflect the complexities of our contemporary social and cultural communities. Some scholars have criticized the model’s portrayal of cultural identity as linked to a specific language or nation (Dervin, 2010, 2015; Ros i Solé, 2013). In our modern world notions of globalisation, migration and technological advancements have given a new view on the concepts “culture” and “identity” as dynamic and changeable (see Davcheva & Fay, 2016; Holliday, 2011). With this in mind, Kramsch (2011) argues that IC must be comprehended as more than the

capacity to communicate smoothly across cultural borders or the empathetic understanding of otherness (Hoff, 2017, p.444).

Byram's model of ICC embraces the "intercultural speaker's" commitment with FL texts, but it does not convey to "what distinguishes processes of text interpretation, and particularly the reading of literary texts, from other forms of intercultural communication" (Hoff, 2016, p. 59). Reconceptualising Byram's (1997) concept of the "intercultural speaker", Hoff (2016) presents a descriptive and prescriptive model for the reading of FL literature: The Model of the Intercultural reader (MIR), which centres particularly on the characteristics of the "intercultural reader", which will be further discussed in the following section.

### **2.3 Using literature in an EFL classroom to encourage IC**

My main argument for using literary texts to promote IC development is "literature's ability to represent the particular voice of a writer among the many voices of his or her community and thus to appeal to the particular in the reader" (Kramsch 1993, p 130). Moreover, Kramsch (2011) says that the practice of reading FL literature permits a 'symbolic dimension' to be incorporated in the notion of IC. According to Fenner (2001), FL literary texts represent 'the personal voice of a culture' (p. 16), which permits an input of detailed cultural information while also creating a personal dialogue with otherness. One must have in mind that, as does IC, the reading of literary texts works at a cognitive and emotional level (Narancic-Kovac & Kaltenbacher, 2006). Therefore, the reading of literature is hence a "more subjective and emotional experience than the reading of factual texts" (Hoff, 2016, p.54). The narrative of a literary text challenges the reader to see things from another point of view (Bredella, 2006), and, as Hoff (2016) points out, "to enter into a negotiating dialogue with the values and worldviews inherent in the text" is an essential skill/attribute of IC (p.55).

Kramersch (1993), found that many teachers feel hesitant to use literary texts in a FL classroom due to a dichotomy between English language-literature departments in many universities worldwide. Language teachers and literary scholars avoid treading on each other's fields of expertise. When a literary text is included in a language classroom its purpose is usually to analyse linguistic aspects but teachers tend to avoid deeply analysing any cultural aspects. Furthermore, language teachers are also hesitant to use literary texts because they believe that their students' comprehension skills will be insufficient to interpret them; however, texts can be read on different levels of meaning. As Kramersch (1993) states, "the pedagogical question may not be whether language teachers should teach literature or not, but, rather: how can language teachers help learners read texts at a variety of levels of meaning?" (pp.7-8). Following this line of thought, Fenner (2001) asserts that "if young learners take an interest in the topic of the story, they can cope with surprisingly difficult texts as regards vocabulary, structure and length" (p. 27). Teachers shouldn't underestimate their students' ability to comprehend difficult texts, Fenner (2001) further argues that the learners must be "given the opportunity to discover that unfamiliar vocabulary (...) does not necessarily present an unsurpassable obstacle to grasping meaning" (p. 27). As Hoff (2013) states, misunderstanding and conflict are inherent aspects of any intercultural communication process (p.32). This justifies my will of using excerpts of authentic literary texts for the activities.

As what happens with literature, culture is also a hesitant aspect of language teaching. Even though culture is considered the 5th skill, it is usually relegated in preference of the other 4 (listening, speaking, reading, writing), this is to say, "cultural awareness becomes an educational objective itself, separate from language" (Kramersch,1993, p.8). Nevertheless, when viewing the teaching of language from a communicative approach, as a tool for social practice, "cultural awareness becomes essential to language proficiency and as an outcome of reflection of language proficiency" (Kramersch,1993, p.8).

As for the literature written on the capacity of FL literature as a way to enhance IC, several scholarly works have hypothesized how the use of FL literary texts can be a medium to study the development of IC (e.g. Bredella, 2006; Greek, 2008; Hoff, 2016; Kramersch, 1993; MacDonald et al, 2009). Some studies have been conducted focusing on the function of literary reading to develop ICC. For example, similar to Gomez's (2013) qualitative research that justified the reasons of using multicultural literatures from the U.S as a motivating material to help EFL learners develop ICC, Rezaei, S. and Naghibian, M. (2018) conducted a qualitative study to investigate the effect of reading short stories from some prominent American authors, in an EFL context in Iran to enhance the learners' ICC. The results of their study proved that literary texts are effective for increasing intercultural awareness. However, both of these studies were conducted in higher education, as have others (e.g. Burwitz-Meltzer, 2001; Gomez, 2012; Gómez, 2018; Porto, 2014; Rodríguez & Puyal, 2012; Thyberg, 2012). Hoff (2016) affirms that other research projects have examined teacher cognition about intercultural competence (Jokikokko, 2005; Larzén-Östermark, 2008; Moloney, 2013; Sercu et al., 2005) and the teaching of literature (Bloemert et al., 2016). With a foundation in Vygotsky's (1986) regard of learning as co-constructed through social interaction, Hoff (2017) carried out an empirical study with upper-secondary students in Norway that aimed to fill a gap in the research on literary reading and intercultural pedagogy by examining how literary texts, tasks and classroom participants interrelate in shaping the ways in which concepts of interculturality are involved in socio-cultural methods of text interpretation, applying her Model of the Intercultural Reader (MIR) as the theoretical framework of her study.

As I mentioned above in section 2.2, Hoff (2016) reconceptualised Byram's (1997) concept of the "intercultural speaker" to conceptualise the "intercultural reader". The MIR (see figure 2) "is based on an understanding of reading as a negotiative,

communicative experience, and therefore rests on the foundation that the reading of FL texts inherently implicates processes of intercultural communication” (Hoff, 2017, p.446).

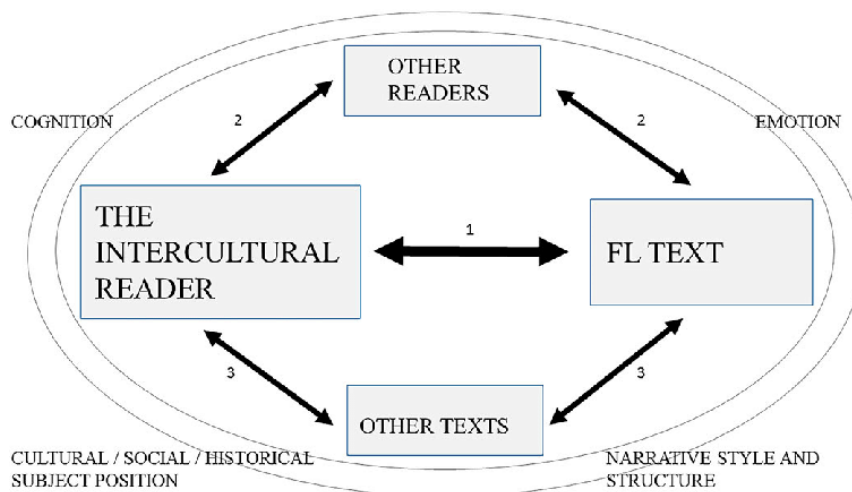


Figure 2. The model of the intercultural reader's (MIR) engagement with FL literary texts. Hoff, H.E, (2016).

The model represents three levels that describe the ideal ‘intercultural reader’s’ interaction with FL texts. This model can also be useful to guide teaching procedures and reading practices in the FL classroom. In this respect, the main task for the FL teacher “is to draw the learners’ attention to potential ‘gaps’ in the text, and then to encourage them to explore such ambiguities from a variety of different vantage positions involving all of the three levels of communication described in the model.” (Hoff, 2016, p.64). Level 1 of the model represents the “intercultural reader’s” engagement with the FL text and its literary voices (characters, narrators...). Level 2 results in the contemplation of the ways in which other readers might communicate with the text. Lastly, level 3 involves intertextuality, that is, reflecting on how the text communicates or relates to other texts. All three levels involve the “intercultural reader’s” emotions as well as her cognition as she contemplates “the effects of the narrative style and structure of the text as well as the different cultural, social and historical subject positions of

text(s) and reader(s)” (Hoff, 2017, p.446). Like this, Hoff (2017) considers that the reading of FL text can be a multifaceted process that contributes to learners’ understanding of intercultural communication as a “complex, changing and conflictual endeavor” (Kramersch, 2011, p. 359).

Bobkina and Stefanova (2017) carried out a case study in Spain which analysed the Effectiveness of Teaching Critical Thinking Skills through Literature in EFL Context, with very positive results. To do so, they draw upon a model based on strategies that are reinforced by both the reader-centered critical reading approach and the critical pedagogy approach. They believe that critical thinking skills needed to work with literary texts in the EFL classroom “can be broadly defined as a set of processes whose main dimensions include the interpretation of the world, self-reflection, intercultural awareness, critical awareness, reasoning and problem-solving, and language use” (Bobkina & Stefanova, 2016, p. 685).

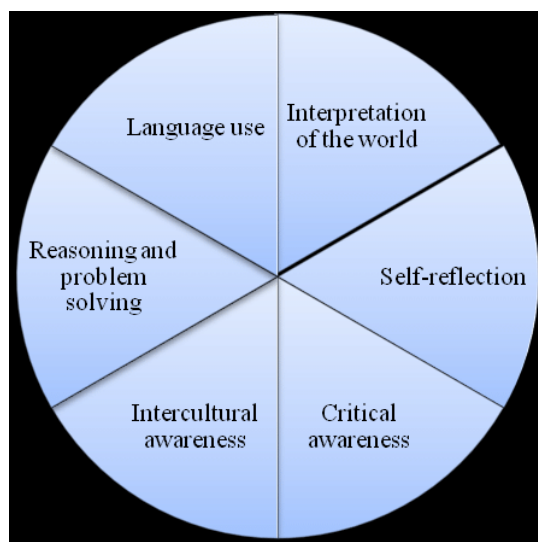


Figure 3. Critical thinking skills required to work with literary texts (Adapted from Bobkina & Stefanova, 2016)

The authors also adapted the theoretical framework to a pedagogical model



grounded on the ideas of multiliteracies pedagogy which they put into practice through a sequence of activities (Kalantzis & Cope, 2000; Cope & Kalantzis, 2009; 2013; 2015) while trying to address the full scope of literacies (see Figure 4).

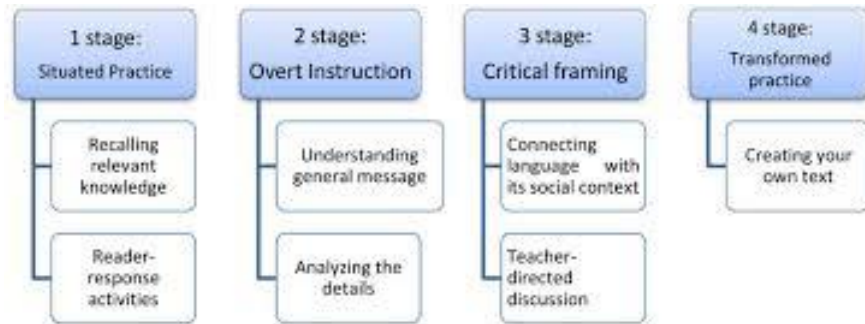


Figure 4. Pedagogical application of the model of teaching critical thinking skills through literature (Bobkina & Stefanova, 2016)

This four-stage process, represented in figure 4, is designed to apply the model of teaching critical thinking skills but I believe it can also be useful for promoting IC at the same time if one chooses the appropriate text, as critical thinking skills include intercultural awareness. Moreover, Gómez (2018) wrote a paper which proposes using critical thinking tasks to foster EFL learner's ICC in a genre-based environment. Returning to the model; Bobkina & Stefanova (2017) describe that the first stage (situated practice) consists of handing out pre-reading activities to help students become familiar with the topic and they share the emotions the text evoked in them or their ideas and own experiences. The second stage (overt instruction) intends to help students grasp the general message through comprehension questions of the text and discussion activities. Analyzing details through a close reading assists the understanding of the inner logic of the literary text. The third stage (critical framing) draws the students' conscious attention to connections between the language and sociocultural contexts. The teacher's directed discussion helps students explore the intentions of the writer's attitude, point of view, and intentions through the analysis of the lexical and structural choices of the text. Lastly, the fourth stage

(transformed practice) encourages students to create their own texts, that may include reshaping the original texts within the same mode or shifting from one mode to another, like writing a scene from another character's point of view for example (p.254).

After looking at different scholars' methods of enhancing IC through literature it is obvious that there is more than one way to undertake this endeavor. For the didactic proposal I shall draw upon the different theoretical frameworks to create my activities with selected excerpts of literary works for EFL secondary students. The most relevant ones being Bobkina & Stefanova's (2016) pedagogical application of the model of teaching critical thinking skills through literature and Hoff's (2016) Model of the Intercultural Reader (MIR).

#### **2.4 Using fiction to reduce prejudices and discriminatory beliefs in the EFL classroom.**

As indicated by The Common European Framework of References for Languages (Council of Europe, 2001), cultural knowledge and intercultural awareness are basic aspects of language learning, explicitly connected to the promotion of personal development. According to the Language Policy Division "Intercultural competence, for its part, makes it easier to understand otherness, to make cognitive and affective connections between past and new experiences of otherness, mediate between members of two (or more) social groups and their cultures, and question the assumptions of one's own cultural group and environment." (2016, p.8). As such it reflects the globalized and multicultural social orders which have become our modern reality.

With this in mind, the fictional texts that will be used in this proposal will be centered on helping students reduce prejudices and stereotypes regarding people's ancestry. I would like to mention that I prefer to use the word "ancestry"

or “ethnicity” over the term “race”, as I consider the concept of race to be socially constructed and it implies an idea of hierarchy and biological classification amongst human beings. However, historically humans have been classified by “race” in order to justify their oppression, therefore sometimes the use of the term “racial prejudice” will be used to describe this practice. Cai (2000) states that both ignorance and prejudices are barriers that hinder understanding and respect amongst diverse cultural groups. A way to decrease prejudices and discriminatory perspectives, is to hand students more books centred on culture that heighten readers’ knowledge of cultures other than their own (Gómez, 2013, p.101). Furthermore, Wiland (2000) indicates that a focal attribute of fiction is that it “stages encounters within the personality of the reader, expanding horizons, challenging prejudices as well as confirming beliefs” (p. 213). From this perspective, the text becomes a cultural meeting point, and a dialogue between the text and the reader is established (Hoff, 2013, p.32).

The activities will help EFL learners reflect about different situations of immigration, discrimination and marginalization in Britain and the United States. A main objective is to guide students to be conscious of the necessity to develop their IC to be more understanding, respectful and open-minded towards people that are different from their own cultural background.

### **3. Didactic Proposal**

This didactic proposal is arranged around literary texts to create activities which enhance IC intended for the EFL classroom in secondary schools in the Balearic islands. Most of the activities are based on the methodology proposed by Bobkina & Stefanova (2016) which is a four-stage procedure to teach critical thinking skills through literature. This methodology helps students enhance their intercultural awareness, as the themes will be related to prejudice, discrimination and oppression due to a person’s ancestry. The authors of the texts selected are

Anglophone writers, although their work reflects on the experience of growing up in a nation as the daughters of immigrants; Andrea Levy in England with Jamaican ancestry and Judith Ortiz Cofer in the United States with Puerto Rican ancestry. Therefore, students will also gain knowledge of the target language’s history, linked to the consequences of colonialism and slavery, which leads to understanding the multi-cultural society we live in today. Table 2 shows of activities divided in the stages of the Model of Teaching Critical Thinking Skills through Literature (Bobkina & Stefanova, 2016).

Table 2 Activities divided by stages in the didactic proposal

<p><b>Activities to analyse the novel <i>Small Island</i> by Andrea Levy</b></p> <p><b>Introducing the novel to the class.</b></p> <p><b>Stage I</b></p> <p><b>Recalling relevant knowledge</b></p> <p>Activity 1: Webquest: Understanding the historical background. A</p> <p>Activity 2: Webquest. Research on the author and the novel</p> <p><b>Reader-response activities</b></p> <p>Activity 3: Warm up: Introducing the novel</p> <p>Activity 4: Reading a summary and comparing reviews</p> <p>Activity 5: Introducing the characters and their narrative voices</p>
<p><b>Prejudice and discrimination in <i>Small Island</i>.</b></p> <p><b>Stage I</b></p> <p><b>Recalling relevant knowledge</b></p> <p>Activity 1: Pre-reading activity: Webquest: Research on the historical context on Jim Crow Law.</p> <p>Activity 2: Pre-reading activity: Listening BBC radio program “Witness History: Black GIs during World War II.”</p> <p><b>Reader-response activity</b></p> <p>Activity 3: Contextualization of the scenes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The tea shop incident – pp.177-178, pp.179-180</li> <li>• The picture house incident – pp.184-85, pp.186-187</li> </ul> <p><b>Stage II</b></p> <p><b>Understanding the general message and analysing the details</b></p> <p>Activity 4: Understanding general message and Analysing the language details</p> <p><b>Stage III</b></p> <p><b>Connecting language with its social context</b></p> <p>Activity 5: Connecting language with its social context in the scenes</p> <p><b>Teacher-directed discussion</b></p> <p>Activity 5.1: Teacher-directed discussion of the scenes</p> <p><b>Stage IV</b></p> <p><b>Creating you own text</b></p> <p>Activity 6: Follow-up activity: Campaigns against discrimination on social media</p> <p>Activity 6.1: Becoming an activist against racism.</p>
<p><b>Chapter 12: Analysing the colonial discourse.</b></p> <p><b>Stage I</b></p> <p><b>Recalling relevant knowledge</b></p>

<p>Activity 1: Soldiers of the Caribbean: Britain's forgotten war heroes.  Activity 2: Introducing the concept of the “Mother Country” in the colonial discourse.  <b>Stage II</b>  <b>Understanding the general message</b>  Activity 3: Understanding the general message in chapter 12  <b>Stage III</b>  <b>Connecting language with its social context</b>  Activity 4: Connecting language with its social context in chapter 12  <b>Stage IV</b>  <b>Creating your own text</b>  Activity 5: Writing a letter from Gilbert’s point of view</p>
<p><b>Questions stereotypes regarding immigrants by analysing Hortense</b>  <b>Stage III</b>  <b>Connecting language with its social context</b>  Activity 1: Chapter twenty-two (p. 225-232). Queenie visits Hortense in her room.  Activity 2: Chapter thirty-three (pp. 329-336). Hortense and Queenie go to the shops.  Activity 3: Fragment from chapter fifty (pp. 448-455). Hortense presents herself for a teaching position at the offices of the education authority.  Activity 4: Fragment from chapter fifty-one (pp.463-465). Hortense and Gilbert in the coffee shop.</p>
<p><b>Analysing the climax scene in <i>Small Island</i></b>  <b>Stage I</b>  <b>Recalling relevant knowledge</b>  Activity 1: Clip of chapter fifty-eight from the BBC series adaptation of <i>Small Island</i>.  <b>Reader-response activity</b>  Activity 2: Reader-response activities to the climax scene  <b>Stage II</b>  <b>Understanding the general message</b>  Activity 3: Understanding the inner logic of the literary text.  <b>Analysing language details</b>  Activity 4: Analysing the language details in the climax scene  <b>Stage III</b>  Activity 5: Connecting language with its social context in the climax scene.  Activity 6: Teacher directed class discussion  <b>Stage IV</b>  <b>Creating your own texts</b>  Activity 7: Rewriting a scene.</p>
<p><b>Activities to analyse an excerpt from “American History” by J. Ortiz Cofer</b></p>
<p><b>Thinking about prejudice in “American History”</b>  <b>Stage I</b>  <b>Recalling relevant knowledge</b>  Activity 1: Warm-up: Thinking about immigration.  <b>Stage II</b>  Activity 2: Understanding the general message and analysing language details in “American History” by Ortiz Cofer.  <b>Stage III</b>  Activity 3: Connecting language with its social context.  <b>Stage IV</b>  <b>Creative writing</b>  Activity 4: Rewrite a scene from the short story and role-play.</p>

### 3.1 Activities to analyse the novel *Small Island* by Andrea Levy

In this section several activities are presented with a series of passages from Andrea Levy's acclaimed novel *Small Island* (2004). The work is a tragicomedy that portrays postwar British society in a captivating and thoughtful manner as it describes the first dynamic encounters between immigrant black Caribbean citizens and the white British inhabitants. It is narrated by four characters, each with their own point of view on the circumstances. There are several themes throughout the novel that serve to enlighten the intercultural competence, such as racial prejudice and discrimination, the colonial discourse, clash of cultures and immigration. With the use of a first person narration Levy portrays different voices, as she said in an interview for the *Caribbean Beat* (2004) when referring to the setting of the story during the Second World War "But I am not telling it from only a Jamaican point of view. I want to tell stories from the black and white experience. It is a shared history." There are two Jamaican narrators, Hortense and Gilbert Joseph, who married and migrated to England after the war. The other two narrators are a married English couple, Queenie and Bernard Bligh. Throughout the novel connections are established with all of the characters and it is narrated in an achronological order, switching between 1948 and "before". The reader becomes attached to each of the characters, with their different values, worldviews, aspirations, experiences and faults.

These activities could be worked on during the whole academic year according to the academic program, perhaps doing one after every two units for example. There are many historical references in the novel, therefore one could design an interdisciplinary project with the history department; focusing on colonialism, World War II, or the effects of post-colonialism. The activities are intended for higher levels of secondary school, either "4<sup>th</sup> of ESO" or "bachillerato", due to the maturity required to discuss the themes presented in the novel and the level for understanding the reading of the texts. No doubt these authentic texts are challenging for Spanish EFL secondary students, but as Hoff (2013) remarks it is

“essential that FL students learn to regard difficult texts not as impenetrable barriers but as opportunities for interpretation and negotiation of meaning.” (p. 34).

### 3.1.1 Introducing the novel to the class.

This section basically works as Stage 1 “Recalling relevant knowledge” (Bobkina & Stefanova, 2016) of the learning process to help students become familiar with the topics of the novel. Although other sections will also include “Stage 1” activities, because the historical context that surrounds the novel is important in order to obtain a full understanding of the events and themes. Table 3 shows the work plan for the set of pre-reading activities:

Table 3. Work plan of the section: Introducing the novel.

<b>Introducing the novel <i>Small Island</i> to the EFL class.</b>	
Activity	Procedure/Material
Activity 1: Webquest: Understanding the historical background.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Small groups (3-4 SS)</li> <li>• Tablets or laptops.</li> </ul>
Activity 2: Webquest: Research on the author and the novel.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Small groups (3-4 SS)</li> <li>• Tablets or laptops.</li> </ul>
Activity 3: Warm up: Introducing the novel Activity 3.1. Warm up: Discussion questions.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Small groups (3-4 SS).</li> <li>• Worksheet and notebook.</li> </ul>
Activity 4: Reading a summary and comparing reviews.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Small groups (3-4 SS)</li> <li>• Summary</li> <li>• Tablets or laptops to access a webpage.</li> </ul>
Activity 5: Introducing the characters and their narrative voices.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Small groups (3-4 SS)</li> <li>• Worksheets (ANNEX 1).</li> </ul>

#### **Activity 1: Webquest: Understanding the historical background.**

Before reading any fragments, it is important that students do some research on some of the historical events that take place in the novel, as well as learn about the author. Students will learn about the SS Empire Windrush through a webquest (see table 4). Students can form small groups and the group that finds all of the information first wins. Turning the search into a competition promotes motivation.

Table 4: Activity 1: Webquest: Understanding the historical background.

Go to <a href="https://www.icons.org.uk/theicons/collection/ss-windrush/">https://www.icons.org.uk/theicons/collection/ss-windrush/</a> and find out how and why Andrea Levy's father – and Gilbert in the story – came to Britain. Explore the site and answer the following questions:	
<b>What historical event happened in Europe between 1939 and 1945?</b>	A: The Second World War.
<b>What was the name of the ship that docked in Tilbury, Essex?</b>	A: The SS Empire Windrush.
<b>When did it dock?</b>	A: on the 22nd of June, 1948
<b>From where were the passengers that were on board?</b>	A: Jamaica, Trinidad and other Caribbean islands.
<b>Why were they travelling to England?</b>	A: They were called to help reconstruct Britain, which was emerging from the shadow of the second world war.

### Activity 2: Webquest: Research on the author and the novel.

Table 5 shows the activity sequence for a webquest which encourages students to get to know a little about the author and the novel *Small Island*. This is important because many autobiographical elements appear in the novel and they are relevant to the sociocultural context of postwar Britain.

Table 5. Activity 2: Webquest: Research on the author and the novel.

Visit <a href="http://www.andrealevy.co.uk">www.andrealevy.co.uk</a> and read a brief biography of the author. There are many autobiographical elements in <i>Small Island</i> . See if you can find the answers to the following questions:	
<b>When and how did Andrea Levy's parents arrive in England and where were they from originally?</b>	A: In 1948 Andrea Levy's father sailed from Jamaica to England on the <i>Empire Windrush</i> ship and her mother joined him soon after.
<b>When and where was Andrea Levy born?</b>	(A: Andrea was born in London in 1956)
<b>What was it like for Andrea Levy growing up in London?</b>	(A: growing up black in what was still a very white England. This experience has given her a complex perspective on the country of her birth.
<b>What motivated Levy to start writing novels?</b>	A: After attending writing workshops Levy began to write the novels that she, as a young woman, had always wanted to read – entertaining novels that reflect the experiences



	of black Britons, that look closely and perceptively at Britain and its changing population and at the intimacies that bind British history with that of the Caribbean.
<b>Find information on her fourth novel <i>Small Island</i></b>	she explores the adjustments and problems faced by the English people whom those Jamaicans came to live amongst. Immigration changes everyone's lives and in <i>Small Island</i> Levy examines not only the conflicts of two cultures thrown together after a terrible war, but also the kindness and strength people can show to each other.

### Activity 3. Warm-up questions to introduce the novel.

To open the discussion of the novel *Small Island* by Andrea Levy, the teacher can hand out a worksheet with the following question (see figure 5) to the students and have a class discussion with the different ideas they might have, they can write them down in their notebooks.

<b>Warm-up questions to introduce the novel:</b>
The title <i>Small Island</i> encompasses many aspects of the novel, not least, the sense of place. Where is this 'small island'? Could it have a literal significance as well as a metaphorical one? Does 'small' only refer to size, or could it also suggest 'petty', or 'microcosm'?

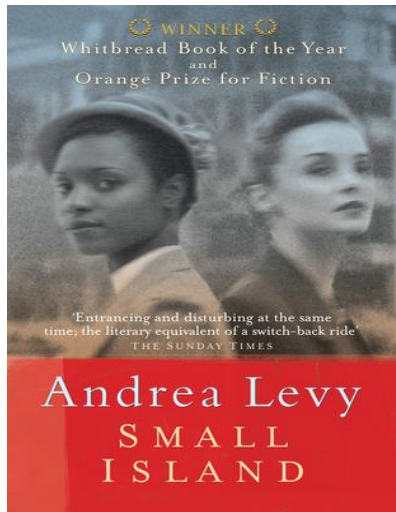
Figure 5: Activity 3. Warm-up questions to introduce the novel.

When students have read some excerpts from the novel, the teacher can come back to this question and ask students to write down their ideas into a few sentences and compare to what they had answered the first time. This can help them reflect on the knowledge they have gained on the novel.

#### Activity 3.1. Warm up: Discussion questions.

The worksheet (see figure 6) consists of a picture of the novel's cover, with a few discussion questions to help students become familiar with novel.

**Warm-up questions to introduce *Small Island*.**



Compare the two women on the cover:

- Describe them using full sentences.
- Where do you think they are from?
- Can you tell something about them by their clothes (place, time...)?
- Do you think they are friends or family?

Figure 6: Activity 3.1. Warm-up discussion questions to introduce the novel

**Activity 4. Reading a summary of the novel and comparing reviews.**

The teacher can now direct the students to read the summary of the novel (see figure 7), retrieved from [www.andrealevy.com](http://www.andrealevy.com).

After this, the teacher can direct student to the click on the link below to compare three reviews on the novel and ask them to write down two features of the novel:

<https://bookmarks.reviews/reviews/small-island/>

**Summary of *Small Island*.**

It is 1948, and England is recovering from a war. But at 21 Nevern Street, London, the conflict has only just begun. Queenie Bligh's neighbours do not approve when she agrees to take in Jamaican lodgers, but Queenie doesn't know when her husband will return, or if he will come back at all. What else can she do? Gilbert Joseph was one of the several thousand Jamaican men who joined the RAF to fight against Hitler. Returning to England as a civilian he finds himself treated very differently. It's desperation that makes him remember a wartime friendship with Queenie and knock at her door. Gilbert's wife Hortense, too, had longed to leave Jamaica and start a better life in England. But when she joins him she is shocked to find London shabby, decrepit, and far from the golden city of her dreams. Even Gilbert is not the man she thought he was.

Andrea Levy handles the weighty themes of empire, prejudice, war and love, with a lightness of touch and a generosity of spirit that challenges and uplifts the reader.

Figure 7: Activity 4. Reading a summary of the novel.

### **Activity 5: Introducing the characters and their narrative voices.**

I believe it is important to know the characters before reading the passages as it will not be possible to read the whole book with secondary students in an EFL classroom. Following the MIR this activity would correspond to Level 1 of the model as it represents the “intercultural reader’s” interaction with the FL text and its literary voices (Hoff, 2016), that is to say, its narrators and characters. This activity will help students see how each character has their own distinct voice, which is very much defined by their origins and culture. Levy’s style of narration is known as multi-vocality, and it is linked to an author willing to show that there is not a single version of history, that there are multi-perspectives alongside side each other (Donell, A., 2017). By being narrated in the first person students can even pick language differences amongst the characters. The teacher can help students see that English has many varieties, in this case they will be seeing some features of Jamaican and British English. For example:

Jamaican variety:

- **“Cha!”**: very common, mild explanation expressing impatience, vexation or disappointment.
- **“me shirt hanging out like a vagabond’s”**: Use of possessive “me” instead of “my”.
- And why everything **look** so dowdy? Unmarked 3<sup>rd</sup> person singular in present verbs.

Students can work individually, in pairs or in groups. The worksheet (ANNEX 1) instructs students to read the summary of each character and write down at least five adjectives or traits that describe each character. They will also have an extract

of each character where they can see her/his narrative voice and they are given the following instructions (adapted from [www.teachit.co.uk](http://www.teachit.co.uk),2008):

Read the following extracts carefully and:

- annotate any interesting use of language in the extracts
- make a list of what seem to be typical language features of each narrator
- note any of the narrators' attitudes the extracts convey
- note any style features e.g. hindsight, free indirect speech.

Afterwards they can share their notes with their peers so that they acquire a full understanding of each character.

### 3.1.2 Analysing Racial Prejudice and Discrimination

These set of activities are aimed to help students become aware of the consequences of prejudice and discrimination based on a person's ancestry. They follow the four-stage procedure of Bobkina & Stefanova (2016). Table 6 shows the work plan to carry out this methodology.

Table 6: Work plan of the section: Analysing Racial Prejudice and Discrimination

<b>Prejudice and discrimination in <i>Small Island</i>.</b>	
<b>Activities</b>	<b>Procedure/Materials</b>
Activity 1: Pre-reading activity: Webquest: Research on the historical context on Jim Crow Law.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Pair work.</li> <li>• Tablet or laptop</li> </ul>
Activity 2: Pre-reading activity: Listening BBC radio program "Witness History: Black GIs during World War II."	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Individually</li> <li>• Notebook</li> <li>• Recording of the programme</li> </ul>
Activity 3: Contextualization of the scenes. Activity 3.1: Summary of the scenes: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The tea shop incident pp.177-180</li> <li>• The picture house incident pp.184-187</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Summary</li> <li>• Class discussion</li> </ul>
Activity 4: Understanding general message and Analysing the language details	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Small groups (3-4)</li> <li>• Worksheet.</li> <li>• Vocabulary list</li> </ul>
Activity 5: Connecting language with its social context.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Small groups (3-4)/class discussion</li> <li>• Worksheet.</li> </ul>

Activity 5.1: Teacher-directed discussion	
Activity 6: Follow-up activity: Campaigns against discrimination on social media Activity 6.1: Becoming an activist against racism.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Class discussion/Individual work</li> <li>• Tablet or laptops.</li> <li>• Projector (youtube video: Reading of <i>Say Something!</i> By P. Reynolds)</li> <li>• Worksheet</li> </ul>

### Stage I: Situated Practice

This stage consists of a series of activities to recall relevant knowledge in order to understand the sociocultural contexts of the scenes that the students will be reading.

### Activity 1: Webquest: Research for historical information on Jim Crow Law

Table 7 shows a webquest to help students become familiar with the historical context which define the extracts for the activities. This is important because at the time segregation was legal in the United States by the Jim Crow Law. In Britain there were no laws that permitted segregation based on a person's origins or ancestry but immigrants from the Caribbean colonies were not treated as British citizen with full rights. Students can work in pairs to search for the information asked for:

Table 7: Activity 1. Webquest. Research for historical information.

With which countries did Great Britain become allies with during WW2 (1939-1945)? Go to: <a href="http://worldwar2history.info/war/Allies.html">http://worldwar2history.info/war/Allies.html</a>	A: The four allied powers were Great Britain, The United States, the Soviet Union and France.
Look up the meaning of the following words: segregation, prejudice, discrimination, oppression. Go to: <a href="https://dictionary.cambridge.org/dictionary/english/ally">https://dictionary.cambridge.org/dictionary/english/ally</a>	A: <b>Segregation</b> : the policy of keeping one group of people apart from another and treating them differently, especially because of race, sex, or religion.
What was <b>Jim Crow law (1877-1954)</b> in the United States? Go to: <a href="https://www.britannica.com/event/Jim-Crow-law">https://www.britannica.com/event/Jim-Crow-law</a> .	A: <b>Jim Crow law (1877-1954)</b> , in U.S. history, any of the laws that enforced racial segregation in the South between the end of Reconstruction in 1877 and the beginning of the civil rights movement in the 1950s.

Which public places were segregated according to the colour of people's skin in the United States during the Jim Crow Law?.	A: Schools, restrooms, restaurants, theatres, cinemas...
Write 2 sentences using " could", "had to" and "were(n't) allowed to" according to the Jim Crow Law.	Example: "In Texas, black people <u>couldn't sit</u> in the same sections as white people in buses." or "In Texas, black people <u>weren't allowed to sit</u> in the same sections as white people in buses." or "Black people <u>had to sit</u> in the sections reserved to colored people in the buses."

## Activity 2: Listening to the BBC radio programme "Witness History: Black GIs during World War II"

This second activity for "recalling relevant knowledge" consists of a listening from a BBC radio programme "Witness History: Black GIs during World War II" (see figure 8) that broadcasts the testimonials of African-American soldiers during WW2. The witnesses explain that they were relegated to support roles in the army, they were not allowed to be in the combat division or hold superior ranks. However, after the battle of the Buldge, African-American soldiers were called to combat on the front line, but they still suffered from segregation and were denied benefits of war soldiers when they returned home to the U.S. The experience of being abroad during WW2 opened the eyes of many African-Americans to the injustices they were submitted to due to segregation in their homeland.

The Teacher plays the recording and asks students to write down four facts that they hear. After the listening, the teacher leads a class discussion with all the information the students managed to capture from the listening. The teacher can add any relevant information that might not have been understood.

<b>Listening activity. BBC radio program "Witness History: Black GIs during World War II."</b>
Check <a href="https://www.bbc.co.uk/sounds/play/w3csywyh">https://www.bbc.co.uk/sounds/play/w3csywyh</a> : Listen to the program Witness History: Black GIs during World War II. <b>Released On:</b> 16 Dec 2019 Available for over a year

For much of World War Two African-American soldiers were relegated to support roles and kept away from the fighting. But after the Allies suffered huge losses during the Battle of the Bulge, they were called on to volunteer for combat. Janet Ball has been speaking Reverend Matthew Southall Brown who saw action in Europe towards the end of the war. He fought in the US Army's 9th Division, 60th Regiment, Company E.

Figure 8: Activity 2. Listening to the BBC radio programme "Witness History: Black GIs during World War II."

### Activity 3: Contextualization of the scenes

The teacher tells students that they will be reading two scenes from *Small Island*; "The Tea shop incident" (pp. 177-180) and "The picture house incident" (pp. 184-187), Gilbert is the narrator. Students are given the following summary (see figure 9) to help them contextualize the scenes in the novel.

#### Context of the scenes in the novel:

These scenes take place in Filey in the county of Yorkshire (England), during the Second World War. Gilbert, a Jamaican airman volunteer of the RAF, has met Queenie Bligh after delivering her mentally deranged father-in-law, Arthur Bligh, to her home. Gilbert had encountered Arthur lost and disorientated in the local village. The village of Filey has installed a British and an American training camp. Britain and the United States are allies, fighting a common enemy, however we will see that there is an internal war going on between the two armies based on racial prejudice and discrimination.

Figure 9: Activity 3: Contextualization of the scenes

### Activity 3.1: Summary of the scenes

After reading the contextualization of the scenes in the novel (see figure 8 above) the teacher can lead a class discussion asking the students what they think might happen in these scenes having in mind the historical information they have just done research on in the webquest activity and the listening activity. After hearing their opinions, the teacher can hand out the following summaries of the two scenes (see figure 10).

#### Summaries of "The Tea Shop incident" and "The Picture house incident".

The Tea Shop incident:

Gilbert runs into Queenie on the street in Filey, she is looking for her father-in-law, Arthur, again. He left the house that morning and must be wondering around the village. Queenie invites Gilbert to have a drink with her in a local tea shop. However, inside the tea shop there are American GI soldiers, and Gilbert knows that the sight of him, a “coloured” man, with a “white” woman will enrage them. Unlike the African-American soldiers, Gilbert has just discovered the hatred that can be directed towards a person due to their heritage. He knows that Queenie and himself could be in danger should the GI's be provoked, but he also enjoys taunting them because he is a British airman volunteer, they are not abided by Jim Crow Law on British land.

**The Picture house incident**

Queenie and Gilbert leave the tea shop suddenly at the sight of Arthur wondering by on the road, Queenie was unaware of the angry GI soldiers who were about to start a fight with Gilbert. She invites Gilbert to join them at the picture house. However, at the picture house the usherette wants Gilbert to sit in the back, Gilbert and Queenie are confused at first, but they soon realise that the picture house is segregating its customers. Gilbert refuses to be separated from his friends, and Queenie is also outraged. Soon, the white American GI's sitting at the front and the African-American GI's sitting at the back will get involved in the discussion and a “battle” will break loose.

Figure 10: Activity 3: summaries of the scenes.

**Stage II: Overt Instruction**

In this stage students will be conceptualising with theory according to Bobkina and Stefanova's (2016) methodology. The lessons in this section aim to enhance students' intercultural awareness through a close reading of the text by the means of comprehension questions to understand the general message and analyse language details.

**Activity 4: Understanding general message and analysing language details**

The lesson plan focuses on the presentation of wartime racial prejudice and discrimination in Levy's novel. Students will be handed two textual examples to focus on:

- The tea shop incident (Levy, 2004, pp.177-180)
- The picture house incident (Levy, 2004, pp.184-187)

Students will be given a vocabulary list to help with the reading of the texts. The teacher can conduct some discussion activities to help grasp the general message and analyse some language details of the scenes (see table 8).

Table 8: Vocabulary list for activity 4.



**Vocabulary list and comprehension questions for the reading of the scenes “The Tea Shop incident” and “The Picture house incident”.**

**GI:** Terms used to refer to soldiers of the US army during World War II.

**RAF:** Royal Air Force

**Airman:** Soldier of the British Royal Air Force

**Ally/Allies:** a country that has agreed officially to give help and support to another one, especially during a war.

**Tommies:** Slang term for a common soldier in the British army.

**Yanks:** Slang term referred to people from the United States. Can be used in a pejorative way.

**Nigger:** This pejorative slang term is strongly offensive used to refer to a person of dark skin.

**Whitey:** Pejorative slang term to refer to a person of white skin.

**Coloured person:** Refers to a person of dark skin colour or African ancestry.

**Comprehension questions:**

- Summarize each scene in one sentence.
- In the picture house scene, did you notice the power language has when used to oppress and humiliate people?
- What is the prevailing mood in the scenes? That is to say, the overall feeling you get after reading them (reflective, gloomy, cheerful, lighthearted, tense, angry...).
- What does the expression “lady luck is a fickle woman” (p.180) mean?
- Find 5 adjectives with negative connotations that Gilbert uses to describe the GIs.
- What is your general impression? Would you say the scenes are optimistic or pessimistic?

### **Stage III: Critical framing**

In this stage students will be doing some activities that aim to analyse the scenes they have read from a critical perspective. The activities draw the students' attention to the novels structure, form and use of language.

#### **Activity 5: Connecting language with its social context**

Students will follow the instructions from the worksheet (see table 9). This resource is not my own creation; it is retrieved from: <https://www.teachitenglish.co.uk/ks5-prose/small-island-by-andrea-levy/tags/1476>

The worksheet consists of a series of comprehension questions that will help them read consciously and analyse language details, as well as critically connecting language with its social context. These activities can be done in groups, preferably mixed-ability groups.

Students will be instructed to search for textual evidence to support their arguments, think about, and make notes on the following aspects of narrative in the scenes they have read: Form, structure, and language. Which are guided by the following analytical questions (see table 9):

Table 9: Activity 5. Analytical questions to connect language with its social context

Language details in “The Tea Shop incident” and “The Picture house incident”.
<p><b>Form</b></p> <p>Who narrates?</p> <p>How do we get other points of view?</p>
<p><b>Structure</b></p> <p>What happens just before/just after the incident?</p> <p>Is there a turning point in the action or narrator’s feelings?</p>
<p><b>Language</b></p> <p>What kind of imagery is used?</p> <p>Think about the tone of Levy’s writing. Is she relentlessly serious? Is she accusatory? Humorous? If so, in what way?</p> <p>How is dialogue used?</p> <p>What attitudes do terms of abuse convey?</p>

### Activity 5.1: Teacher-directed discussion

After answering the questions in activity 5, the lesson plan includes notes on the possible answers and examples from the text to reinforce them. The teacher can lead the discussion, indicating where in the excerpts they can find the evidence for these notes (see table 10).

Table 10: Activity 4. Notes for class discussion.

Notes for class discussion
<p><b>Notes on form</b></p> <p><b>Tea shop</b></p> <p>The presentation of racial prejudice and discrimination in the tea shop incident encourages the reader to interpret it as unfair to Gilbert. Levy does this by narrating events from Gilbert’s point of view so that the reader will sympathise with him. For example, ‘These poor GIs were in <b>murderous mood</b> watching a nigger sitting with his head still held high.’</p>
<p><b>Notes on structure</b></p> <p><b>Picture house</b></p>

The picture house trip follows straight on from the tea shop incident and for the characters is intended as light relief but instead creates more conflict based on racial discrimination, as Gilbert is told to sit separately from Queenie and Arthur. The incident seems to be coming to an end as the audience leaves the picture house, with: 'it was clear the passion for this fight was gone...' creating a sense of anti-climax.

**Structure turning point**

However, the Military Police arrive and Levy uses the metaphor 'Oxygen to a dying flame, these MPs soon had this fight blazing again like an inferno.' This incident with Arthur being shot dead, and Gilbert's question "Arthur Bligh had become another casualty of war – but come, tell me, someone ... which war?" Here Levy highlights the irony of white oppression of other races amongst forces fighting German 'persecution of the Jews'.

**Notes on language:**

**Imagery**

There is irony in Levy's choice of war imagery to convey the prejudice of the white GIs towards Gilbert as they are supposed to be allies.

In the tea shop, the three GIs watch Gilbert and Queenie, 'like snipers clearing their aim at a sitting target.' This simile conveys the anger, jealousy and latent violence aimed at Gilbert.

When the lights come up in the picture house, 'as sure as Napoleon and Wellington before Waterloo, that usherette had drawn up a battlefield.' This analogy shows the unwitting collusion of white British people, unused to such extreme racial discrimination.

**Notes on tone:**

Despite the latent violence of both situations, Levy introduces humour:

- a) In the tea shop using dramatic irony created by Queenie's lack of awareness of how her actions were 'boiling the blood of those GIs' and Gilbert's response, 'was captivated by the impotent rage in their eyes. What sport!'
- b) In the picture house, Gilbert's exchange with the usherette illustrates her ignorance of the euphemism for segregation, Jim Crow, responding, 'Well, if he's coloured he'll have to sit at the back.'

**Notes on dialogue:**

Dialogue allows Levy to convey points of view other than Gilbert's, particularly in the picture house where white GIs use racist terms, e.g. 'nigger' that are much more offensive than the response, 'whitey'. The direct speech of women in the audience show their support of Queenie and Gilbert and their own feeling against US forces, e.g. 'You tell 'em, love – ruddy loudmouth Yanks.'

In the tea shop scene the waitress's brisk dialogue, 'Now sit down' directed towards the GIs, who try to follow Gilbert out of the tea shop, pokes fun at the men, who are made to look like 'Mummy-fearing boys'

## Stage IV: Transformed practice

In this stage students can apply the knowledge they have acquired through the previous activities in a creative practice. Here they will relate the situations of injustice they have read about in the scenes from the novel *Small Island* to their contemporary society and compare to what extent people still suffer from racial prejudice. The activities aim to develop students' cultural awareness of others.

## Activity 6: Follow-up activity: Campaigns against discrimination on social media

After analysing the two scenes, following Hoff's (2016) Model of the Intercultural Reader (MIR) methodology, the teacher should direct the learner's attention to how the text bears traces of other texts, voices and discourses, that is to say, draw attention to issues of intertextuality in level 3 communication. To accomplish this, the teacher can direct students to think about other texts, series or films that remind them of these scenes.

Teenagers are not familiar with many literary works, that is why I believe that using social media as a comparison to the themes presented in *Small Island* could be motivating and help them develop their intercultural awareness further. After brainstorming different intertextual relations that the students might come up with, the following activity can be proposed (see figure 11):

- Think about movements in social media that campaign against acts of racism, prejudice and injustice. Write them down and discuss how they can help.

Figure 11: Activity 6. Campaigns against discrimination on social media.

Students might think of trending hashtags such as [#blacklivesmatter](https://blacklivesmatter.com/about/) (<https://blacklivesmatter.com/about/>), [#imnotavirus](#), chinese and asian community launch this hashtag is response to racist attacks and discrimination due the coronavirus outbreak, or [#GeorgeFloyd](#) and [#WalkWithUs](#), response to the murder of US citizen George Floyd by the hands of police brutality and has caused outrage across the world.

## 6.1 Becoming an activist: We will speak up!

This activity has been adapted from a lesson plan by Buzzing with Ms. B, downloaded from <https://www.teacherspayteachers.com/Product/Becoming-an-Activist-Anti-Racist-Resource-4932946>

The aim of the activity is to help students identify what they can do when they see a racist interaction or practice. To encourage them to be activists rather than bystanders.

### Teacher's note:

Student safety comes first. Stress the idea of taking "safe" action. If students are out in the world and try to help, they can put themselves in a dangerous situation. Teacher can advise them to tell an adult or get help from the authorities if necessary.

If students in the class have been attacked by racism, do not make them share their experience with the class if they do not want to. The focus of this activity is to engage students in thinking about how they can make a change, not to force anyone to share anything traumatic with the classroom.

### Lesson sequence (see table 11):

Table 11: Lesson sequence of Activity 5. Becoming an activist: We will speak up!

<b>Lesson sequence: Becoming an activist: We will speak up!</b>
Step 1: Remember the scenes we have just read, discuss these questions with the class. Have you seen somebody been attacked due to their origins, ancestry or ethnicity? How did Gilbert react? How do you think Gilbert felt? How do you think Gilbert felt when Queenie defended him? And other civilians in the audience?
Step 2: Set some norms for the class discussion: Respect the speaker, listen to understand, speak from the heart, no one has to share anything personal if they don't want to.
Step 3: Have a class discussion about the times they have seen or heard racism. Here are some questions to help get started: Have you been taught about racism or other kinds of discrimination in school?

Have you read about racism? Have you heard or seen racism in person?
Step 4: Have students fill out the following guide (see table 12). If they have never seen or heard racism or some kind of discrimination in person, then they could imagine they were at the picture house in the scene in <i>Small Island</i> .
Step 5: Talk about how, when people are being discriminated against, one of the things that is most saddening is how other people react. When people don't say anything, the people being discriminated against feel like everyone thinks it's ok.
Step 6: Watch the video of the reading of the story book <i>Say something!</i> By Peter H. Reynolds. Click here: <a href="https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=U-rP-oaRpY">https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=U-rP-oaRpY</a> Discus the idea of activism: doing something when you see that something is wrong. An activist is someone who takes actions when they see social injustice, in this case, racism. Discuss with students the different ways that they can "say something". This might be saying something in the moment, telling an adult, taking (safe) action, or making a plan for change
Step 7: Use the "What do you do?" guide (see table 13) to help students think about safe but important ways to respond to racism.

Table 12 corresponds to step 4 in the lesson sequence:

Table 12: Guide of activity 5: Becoming an activist: We will speak up!

Can you think of a time you saw or heard racism? Describe the situation:
How did the people nearby react?
How did you react?
How do you think your reaction made the people involved feel?
What could you have done differently?

Table 13 corresponds to step 7 in the lesson sequence:

Table 13: Guide "What do you do?" of activity 5: Becoming an activist: We will speak up!

What do you do?	
You can...	
5 Say something	
6 Tell someone	
7 Take safe action	
If I see...	I will...
Someone who feels left out.	
Someone who is being treated differently because of their origins or heritage.	
A person who makes racist comments about other students.	
My friend saying something racist about another student.	

### 3.1.3 Chapter 12. Analysing the discourse of colonialism.

With this lesson plan, students will learn about the colonial discourse, that is, how the British Empire practically brainwashed their colonies into believing that England was a superior nation. Gilbert, the narrator, is disappointed to find that Britain does not know him, or if it does then it considers him as undeveloped and primitive. At the same time, he is also appalled to find that Britain is not as they had told him; it is not a promised land of glory and fortune. In this chapter the teacher can tell students about the western “otherization” of non-western cultures. Table 14 shows the work plan of activities for this section.

Table 14: Work plan of the section: Chapter 12: Analysing the discourse of colonialism

<b>Chapter 12: Analysing the discourse of colonialism</b>	
<b>Activities</b>	<b>Procedure/Material</b>
Activity 1: Soldiers of the Caribbean: Britain's forgotten war heroes.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Pair work</li> <li>• BBC News article “Soldiers of the Caribbean: Britain's forgotten war heroes”.</li> <li>• Notebook</li> </ul>
Activity 2: Introducing the concept of the “Mother Country” in the colonial discourse.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Pair work</li> <li>• Picture of a magazine cover</li> <li>• Notebook</li> </ul>
Activity 3: Understanding the general message.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Pair work or small groups</li> <li>• Chapter 12 from <i>Small Island</i></li> <li>• Worksheet</li> </ul>
Activity 4: Connecting language with its social context.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Pair work or small groups</li> <li>• Chapter 12 from <i>Small Island</i> Worksheet</li> </ul>
Activity 5: Creating your own texts. Write a letter from Gilbert's point of view.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Individual work</li> <li>• Notebook</li> </ul>

#### **Stage I: Situated Practice. Recalling relevant knowledge.**

This stage consists of a series of pre-reading activities to recall relevant knowledge in order to understand the sociocultural contexts for the reading of chapter 12.

### Activity 1: Soldiers of the Caribbean: Britain's forgotten war heroes.

Before reading chapter 12, students work in pairs and read the article on <https://www.bbc.com/news/uk-32703753> "Soldiers of the Caribbean: Britain's forgotten war heroes" By Claire Brennan (BBC News). 13 May 2015, then they answer the following questions (see table 15). This information is relevant because in the chapter, Levy portrays the cultural shock Gilbert (the narrator) and other West Indian soldiers experience upon arriving to England. They consider themselves to be British citizens but they soon realise that the English know nothing about them and much less regard them as their equals.

Table 15: Comprehension questions for activity 1: "Soldiers of the Caribbean: Britain's forgotten war heroes."

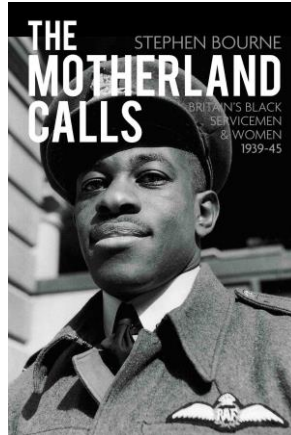
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• In the article, we read about how the war hero Mr. Wilmot, from Jamaica, volunteered for the British Royal Navy at the age of 15. Why do you think he would want to fight in the far away European War?</li></ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Discuss this paragraph from the article in pairs or groups, think about what he means by "being British" if he was born in Jamaica.</li></ul> <p><i>"Away from the frontline, life also presented challenges. Many servicemen struggled to adapt to Britain's cold climate and had to fend off racial prejudice.</i></p> <p><i>"Being British you feel like you are coming home but when we came here it was like we dropped out of the sky. Nobody knew anything about us," said Mr Wilmot."</i></p>

### Activity 2: Introducing the concept of the "Mother Country" in the colonial discourse.

Throughout the novel the Jamaican characters refer to England as their "Mother Country", this term clearly conveys hierarchy between the two islands, as it does in the social order of the island's citizens. This concept will be questioned by the characters and these activities should also promote that critical analysis (see figure 12)



- Work in pairs. Look at the magazine cover from <https://www.caribbeanaircrew-ww2.com/>. Can you guess which country the “Motherland” refers to? This will be relevant for the reading of chapter 12.



- Write down three adjectives that you think of when you hear the word “Mother”:

Figure 12: Comprehension questions for Activity 2: Introducing the concept of the “Mother Country” in the colonial discourse.

## Stage II: Overt Instruction

In this stage students will be conceptualising with theory according to Bobkina and Stefanova’s (2016) methodology. The lessons in this section aim to enhance students’ intercultural awareness through a close reading of the text by the means of comprehension questions to understand the general message and analyse language details.

### Activity 3: Understanding the general message.

Students read Chapter 12. (Levy, 2014, pp.134-142) and then answer the following questions in small groups (see table 16). The questions focus on Gilbert’s point of view regarding the downfall of his expectations towards the

“Mother Country”. After each group will choose a chairman to express their ideas to the rest of the class.

Table 16: Activity 3. Comprehension questions. Analysing chapter 12 in *Small Island*.

What things happen to Gilbert and the other West Indian RAF volunteers when they go into the village? Why?
What things about the British people come as a surprise to Gilbert and his friends?
<i>How come England did not know me?</i> (p. 141) - Can you answer Gilbert's question?
What did all of the 'colony troops' learn in school?
Which products does Gilbert mention that are produced in the Caribbean but the English have no idea where they come from nor where Jamaica is.
<i>"But tell me, if Jamaica was in trouble, is there any major, any general, any sergeant who would have been able to find that dear island?"</i> (p.142). Why do you believe that Jamaicans learned so much about England but England knew nothing of Jamaica?
Describe Gilbert's tone and attitude in his narration. (Is it optimistic? Disappointed? Amused?)

### Stage III: Critical framing

In this stage students will be doing an activity that aims to do a critical analysis of the chapter's use of language with its social context.

#### Activity 4: Connecting language with its social context.

Students will read an excerpt from the chapter and reflect on Gilbert's personified description on the “Mother Country” (see table 17).

Table 17: Activity 4. Comprehension question to connect language with its social context. Analysing chapter 12 in *Small Island*.

Who or What is the “Mother” that Gilbert is describing in the fragment below?
“Let me ask you to imagine this. Living far away from you is a beloved relation whom you have never met. Yet this relation is so dear a kin she is known as Mother. Your own mummy talks of her all the time. ‘Oh, Mother is a beautiful woman- refined, mannerly and cultured’. (...) Then one day you hear Mother calling-she is troubled, she need your help. Your mummy, your daddy say go. Leave home, leave familiar, leave love. Travel seas with waves that swell about no sacrifice is too much to see you at Mother's needy side. This surely is adventure. After all you have heard, can you imagine, can you believe, soon, soon you will meet Mother?

The filthy tramp that eventually greets you is she. Ragged, old and dusty as the long dead. Mother has a blackened eye. Bad breath and one lone tooth that waves in her head when she speaks (...) She offers you no comfort after your journey. No smile. No welcome. Yet she looks down at you through lordly eyes and says, 'Who the bloody hell are you?'. (p.139).

Think about how "The Mother Country" received Gilbert and other West Indian servicemen. Now write three adjectives to describe it, compare to what you wrote above when describing a "Mother".

#### **Stage IV: Transformed practice**

In this stage students do a creative writing where they can try to place themselves in Gilbert's shoes, reflecting on what they have learned about his experience.

#### **Activity 5: Write a letter from Gilbert's point of view.**

In this activity students should show some understanding towards otherness, meaning that they are able to show empathy towards someone with a different cultural background from themselves. They are instructed to write an informal letter from Gilbert's point of view explaining the encounters and cultural shock he has experienced in England (see figure 13).

Gilbert feels like he has been lied to his whole life; Britain does not know him nor do the English people consider him to be a British citizen. Imagine that he writes a letter to a family member back in Jamaica telling them of his encounters in England. Keep the conventions of an informal letter.

Figure 13: Activity 5. Creating your own text.

#### **3.1.4 Questioning stereotypes regarding immigrants through the analysis of Hortense in *Small Island*.**

Hortense followed Gilbert to Britain naively believing all she has been taught about the superiority of the British and her privileged place among them. I find that Hortense is a very interesting character in the novel because, in my opinion, she is the one that undergoes the most drastic transformation. Through her eyes we

can see what a Jamaican immigrant thinks of the British, not the other way around which is what we normally see living in a Western society where white supremacy is the standard discourse. Hortense regards the British against the grain of expectations, as we will see in the fragments from the novel chosen for the following activities. The activities will centre on helping students deconstruct stereotypes regarding immigrants and reflect if they are still imposed in our society today, as well as help them connect emotionally to Hortense’s character, which is an essential aspect of Hoff’s (2016) methodology within the Model of the Intercultural Reader (MIR). These activities (see table 18) centre on the relations between language, culture and social norms, therefore they can be included in “Stage III: Critical Framing”, “which deals with the students’ conscious attention to relationships between linguistic forms and sociocultural contexts”. Also, Levy’s “attitude, point of view, and intentions are explored through the analysis of the lexical and structural choices of the text” (Bobkina & Stefanova, 2017, p.254).

Table 18: Work plan for the section Questioning stereotypes regarding immigrants through the analysis of Hortense in *Small Island*.

<b>Questioning stereotypes regarding immigrants through the analysis of Hortense in <i>Small Island</i>.</b>	
<b>Activities</b>	<b>Procedure/Materials</b>
Activity 1: Chapter twenty-two (p. 225-232). Queenie visits Hortense in her room.	8 Small groups (3-4) 9 Youtube clip of the BBC series adaptation of <i>Small Island</i> . 10 Excerpt of chapter twenty-two. 11 Worksheet with comprehension questions.
Activity 2: Chapter thirty-three (pp. 329-336). Hortense and Queenie go to the shops.	12 Small groups (3-4) 13 Excerpt of chapter thirty-three. 14 Worksheet with comprehension questions.
Activity 3: Fragment from chapter fifty (pp. 448-455). Hortense presents herself for a teaching position at the offices of the education authority.	15 Small groups (3-4) 16 Excerpt of chapter fifty. 17 Worksheet with comprehension questions.
Activity 4: Fragment from chapter fifty-one (pp.463-465). Hortense and Gilbert in the coffee shop.	18 Small groups (3-4) 19 Excerpt of chapter fifty-one 20 Worksheet with comprehension questions.

**Activity 1: Chapter twenty-two (pp. 225-232). Queenie visits Hortense in her room.**

This chapter is narrated by Hortense and it is very comical due to the misunderstandings between Hortense and Queenie due to language barriers and cultural differences. After reading chapter 22 (Levy, 2004, pp. 225-232) the teacher can show students a clip of the chapter from the BBC series adaptation, this will help them hear the differences of the characters' accents. The teacher can annotate differences between British and Jamaican English.

Link to BBC series clip of *Small Island*:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=pHHmLWQUPRk>

A class discussion can be held to see if students noticed any differences between the characters' speech. What is interesting about reading the chapter is that the reader knows what Hortense is thinking all along. Afterwards, students will answer the following questions (see table 19) in small groups, searching for evidence in the text. These questions will help students see the misunderstanding between the two characters due to language and sociocultural barriers.

Table 19: Activity 1. Comprehension questions to connect language with its sociocultural context.

Comprehension questions	Evidence in the text
<p>1. <b>Find three misunderstandings between Hortense and Queenie due to language barriers.</b></p>	<p>“Excuse me’, I said, ‘but would you perchance have a basin that I might get a use of?’            ‘A what?’            ‘A basin’ I repeated.            ‘Sorry’.            ‘A basin to put at the sink’.            ‘A bee- to put what?’            ‘A basin’.            ‘I’m sorry but I don’t understand what you’re saying’.            I thought to say it again slower but then remembered an alternative that would work as well. ‘A bucket’, I said.            ‘A what?’ she started again.            It was useless. Was I not speaking English?’.            (p.228).</p>

<p>2. Find three misunderstandings between Hortense and Queenie due to cultural differences.</p>	<p>'Cat got your tongue?' she said. What cat was she talking of? Don't tell me there was a cat that must also live with us in this room." (p.227).</p>
<p>3. Find three moments where Hortense finds Queenie's behavior to be rude or inappropriate.</p>	<p>"(...) And then she sat down on a chair and invited me to come and sit with her. But this was my home, it was for me to tell her when to sit, when to come in, when to warm her hands. I could surely teach this woman something, was my thought. Manners! But then I questioned, Maybe this is how the English do things when they are in England? So I sat." (p.229).</p>
<p>4. Discuss the moment that Queenie offers to show Hortense around the shops and to use her ration book*, which is also represented in the BBC clip we saw earlier. Queenie tells Hortense:  <i>"It's alright. I don't mind being seen in the street with you. You'll find I'm not like most. It doesn't worry me to be seen out with darkies." (..)</i> To which Hortense is left feeling puzzled as she thinks: <i>"Now, why should this woman worry to be seen in the street with me? After all, I was the teacher and she was only a woman whose living was obtained from the letting of rooms. If anyone should be shy it should be I. And what is a darkie? (...)"</i>. (p.231)  <b>*Ration Book:</b> an official document entitling the holder to a ration of food, clothes, or other goods.</p>	
<p><b>What are Hortense's standards regarding social hierarchy? Do you believe that there is still a stigma in modern day society towards immigrants? Do you think that the colour of their skin can be a barrier for social integration or acceptance? Does their level of education make a difference today?</b></p>	

**Activity 2: Chapter thirty-three (pp. 329-336). Hortense and Queenie go to the shops.**

Similar to chapter 22, chapter 33 (Levy, 2004, pp. 329-336) also holds many miscommunications between Queenie and Hortense, as well her first social experience which results in several moments of cultural shock. Table 20 shows suggest a couple comprehension questions that students can answer in pairs and search for evidence in the text.

Table 20: Activity 2. Comprehension questions to connect language with its sociocultural context.

Comprehension questions	Evidence from the text
Queenie has good intentions and is open-minded, but she is very naive regarding how much culturally Hortense and she already	"But here now, in England so many different complexions were placed before me that my mind became perplexed. This walk to the

<p>share due to colonialism. She believes she has to educate Hortense, which leads her to enforce the cultural stereotype that the colonies are less advanced and less knowledgeable. However, the reader knows that Hortense is more educated, more culturally aware and diverse than Queenie. Find three moments in the chapter to illustrate this reading of the chapter.</p>	<p>shops with Mrs Bligh had me looking about in confusion.          'These are shops,' Mrs Bligh told me. I paid it no mind that this woman believed I could not tell that the place before me, with its window of food displayed, was a shop." (p.350).</p>
<p>Towards the end of the chapter Hortense experiences her first encounter with racism, how does she react?</p>	<p>"While from the other side of the road came shouting. Loud, uncouth and raucous. 'Golliwog, golliwog.' (...) 'Take no notice,' Mrs Bligh said.          'Are they talking to me?' I asked her, (...) What sort of English person could call out so coarse?" (p. 334).</p>

**Activity 3: Fragment from chapter fifty (p. 448-455). Hortense presents herself for a teaching position at the offices of the education authority.**

This could be read just from the moment Hortense enters the offices of the education authority to present herself for a position as a teacher in London (p.452-455). We see how Hortense is rejected with no good reason, she is hit in the face with the upfront discrimination against her origins, which Gilbert had been trying to warn her about in vain. Table 21 shows the discussion questions to analyse how the narrator views this interaction.

Table 21. Activity 3. Analysis of attitudes and points of view

<b>Comprehension questions</b>	<b>Evidence from the text</b>
<p>Discuss how Hortense reacts when the woman at the offices of the education authority rejects her application because she is not "qualified to teach in England".</p>	
<p>How does the author portray that they are undermining Hortense?</p>	

**Activity 4: Fragment from chapter fifty-one (pp. 463-465). Hortense and Gilbert in the coffee shop.**

This moment is a turning point for the two characters involved. Gilbert is the narrator in this chapter, we shall just look at a moment when Gilbert and Hortense are in a tea shop. After the rejection at the offices of the education authority Hortense breaks down and Gilbert comforts her. Although his first reaction was to make fun of his “insufferable” wife after being “wounded after a sharp slap from the Mother Country’s hand”, however his heart is melted at the sight of her crying and mumbling between sobs “They say I can’t teach” (p.458). They finally connect, and Gilbert takes her to see the London sights.

Table 22 shows some critical comprehension questions to analyse the moment when Gilbert and Hortense reconsider her possibilities in England (pp.463-465). These questions are based on the video of professor A. Donell’s (2017) analysis of *Small Island*. This close reading should promote students’ skills of text interpretation and relation and critical cultural awareness (Byram, 1997).

Table 22: Activity 4. Analysing a turning point in the novel for Hortense and Gilbert.

Comprehension question	Evidence in the text
<p>Hortense is an ambitious and educated young woman who believes that she has her whole life ahead of her to exploit her potential. How do we see her reconsider her possibilities in her life in England? Find evidence in the text.</p>	<p>“What can I do know” she said softly. “I thought I would come here and teach”.            (...) “Well, come now, let me see. What else can you do?”            She shrugged.            “Can you sew?”            “Of course”, she told me.            “Is that “of course” like you can cook? Or is it that “of course” because you can actually sew?”            “I can sew. I have been sewing since I was a girl.”            “Good”, I said. “Then I know where you might find some work”.            “Sewing?” She shout this, all tears outraged away. “But I am a teacher.”            “And a teacher you will be even when you are sewing.”. (p. 464).</p>
<p>Do you think that Hortense has to settle for a space that is much “smaller” than the one she could have occupied? Think about the title of the novel.</p>	



Hortense could represent the loss of the possibility of contribution to Britain, because many migrants were not allowed to find their place in society. Do you think that migrants today are still undermined when willing to apply to professional positions?
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### 3.1.5 Climax scene in *Small Island*.

#### Chapter fifty-eight (p.512-522)

With these activities students will analyse the climax scene of *Small Island*, it is one of the most emotional scenes in the book. Queenie has had a baby whose father was a Jamaican RAF soldier, Michael Roberts, they became lovers over a short time during the war. He left for Canada before knowing she was expecting and she never heard from him again. She had been hiding her pregnancy the whole time. When her husband, Bernard, suddenly appeared on her doorstep, after two years without any communication, she was shocked. In this chapter, Queenie begs Gilbert and Hortense to take her baby and raise him as their own. Although she loves her baby, who she has named Michael, she does not feel capable of raising a “coloured” child with her husband, everyone would know that he is not his son, and she knows that in the long run he couldn't stand the shame. Although surprisingly, Bernard is willing to keep the baby and tell people that they adopted him. However, Queenie does not feel capable of bringing him up in a racist society, she believes that he will be better with “his own kind”. Students will be guided to see the consequences of racist prejudices, how they delimit what is socially correct, and to what extent they can affect people’s lives. The reading might lead to a conflictive encounter with the text, which is considered an attribute of IC, as does the characters’ emotions and the social values in the narrative. Table 23 shows the work plan for this section.

Table 23: Work plan of activities for the section: Analysing the climax scene.

Analysing the climax scene in <i>Small Island</i> .	
Activities	Procedure/Materials
Activity 1. Clip of chapter fifty-eight from the BBC series adaptation of <i>Small Island</i> .	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Class discussion</li> <li>• Projector</li> </ul>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Internet connection to see the clip on youtube.</li> <li>• Excerpt of the scene to check dialogue and vocabulary.</li> </ul>
<p>Activity 2. Reader-response activities.</p> <p>Activity 3. Understanding the inner logic of the literary text.</p> <p>Activity 4. Analysing the language details.</p> <p>Activity 5. Connecting language with its social context.</p> <p>Activity 6. Teacher directed class discussion</p> <p>Activity 7. Creating your own texts: Rewriting a scene.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Small groups</li> <li>• Excerpt Chapter fifty-eight</li> <li>• Worksheet</li> </ul>

### Stage I. Situated Practice

Following the guide from a Pedagogical application of the model of teaching critical thinking skills through literature (Bobkina & Stefanova, 2016) we would go straight to part 2 “Reader-response activities” from Stage 1: “Situated Practice”, which implies students reading the text and sharing their ideas, feelings, and experiences.

#### Activity 1: Clip of chapter fifty-eight from the BBC series adaptation of *Small Island*

Students look at this scene from the chapter in the BBC series adaptation of the novel on the class projector, retrieved from:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=F2h4gE8m6o>

This activity will open up the discussion regarding the characters actions. The teacher can direct the discussion by asking questions such as “*how did you think the characters felt? (Queenie, Bernard, Gilbert, Hortense)*”, “*Do you think they reacted adequately?*”. This clip does not have subtitles, so the teacher could read the specific moment of the chapter with the class to look closely at the dialogue and answer any vocabulary questions before watching the scene. It is also a good opportunity to instruct the students to pay attention to the accents of the characters.

## Activity 2: Reader-response activities.

Table 24 shows a reader-response activity to help students become familiar with the topic and share the emotions the text evoked in them or their ideas and own experiences.

Table 24: Activity 2. Reader-response activities

1. Students work in pairs to discuss the feelings of Queenie, who is the narrator in this case. How is she acting before asking Gilbert and Hortense to raise her child? What makes you think that it is a difficult decision for her? How do you think Bernard feels?
2. Discuss this fragment, referring to Queenie and Bernard raising the baby: Why is Queenie so surprised about Bernard's reaction? Why do you believe he is willing to raise a baby that is not his own child and moreover half Jamaican? "And I heard Bernard ask, 'why ever not?' It was so desperately spoken that we all stared at him. So earnestly asked that it should have been funny. Had he really no idea why we, two white people, could not bring up a coloured child? I was winded. I never expected that-Bernard questioning what was so obvious." (p.520).
3. Queenie doesn't want to give Michael up for adoption because they are sending off the "half-caste babies" that had been born since the war to America, and she remembers the episode in the picture house, as she tells Gilbert "You remember, don't you? The Americans. They'd want Michael to go up to the back of the picture house". (p. 522). Remember this scene that we analysed, why does she not want her child to be raised in America?

## Stage II. Overt Instruction

In this stage the learners can draw upon the notions they have learned from previous activities, such as racial prejudice and the social standards in postwar Britain to interpret the text.

## Activity 3. Understanding the inner logic of the literary text

These comprehension questions are based on professor Alison Donnell's (2017) analysis of *Small Island*.

Table 25. Activity 3. Comprehension questions to understanding the inner logic of the text.

1. When Queenie gets down on her knees to beg the Jamaican couple, discuss how she over turns the expectations around social power in the context of the novel (p. 519).
2. Queenie has proved to be open-minded and kind hearted to West Indians throughout the novel, however by denying the possibility of raising her mixed-race child, she confirms in a way societies prejudice belief in mixed race relations. Discuss why you think discourse of race hierarchy could have overcome her belief in the equality of humanity.
3. This ending can be read as a kind of utopian notion of how postcolonial Britain has entwined the lives of these people so much that a child can be passed from one family to another, representing the cultural exchange of the Empire. Do you think this metaphor applies to the episode? Or do you rather think that the prejudice of race in the society gradually damages everybody?

#### Activity 4. Analysing the language details.

In this part the teacher can look at any aspect of language that she sees relevant, it could be for students to look for a verb tense, adjectives, modal verbs (see figure 14)

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Write five sentences using past modals <i>would have</i>, <i>should have</i>, <i>could have</i> to describe hypothetically how the characters could have reacted.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Hortense could have got up and left the room when Queenie asked her to keep her baby.</li> <li>Bernard should have insisted on raising the baby.</li> </ul>
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Figure 14. Activity 4. Questions to analyse language details.

#### Stage III: Critical framing

In this stage students will be doing an activity that aims to do a critical analysis of the chapter's use of language with the emotions of the narrator, as well as a class discussion activity to relate the social views of the text to contemporary society.

#### Activity 5. Connecting language with its social context

This activity aims to show that although Queenie’s actions may seem cold-hearted her use of language towards her baby show her affection and this should help students reflect on the sociocultural prejudices in postwar Britain and their consequences. See figure 15.

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Look for evidence in the text that shows that Queenie’s affection for her baby</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• “Couldn’y hear the wireless from the other room but if he so much as sniffed I knew about it. Felt it in my skin as if we were still attached.” (p. 515).</li> <li>• “His adorable heart-shaped face, glinting eyes and perfect bow mouth couldn’t be looked at for long without even the coldest soul warming.” (p. 516)</li> </ul>
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Figure 15: Question to connect language with its social context

### Activity 6. Teacher-directed class discussion

This activity (see figure 16) consists of a teacher-directed class discussion to help students develop their intercultural awareness skill by reflecting how social diversity and inclusion have improved or not.

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• What makes Michael, vulnerable in Britain?</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• If this situation would happen today. Do you think it would be such a big deal? Have we progressed in terms of equality and social power regarding the colour of people’s skin?</li> </ul>

Figure 16: Questions to direct class discussion.

### Stage IV: Transformed practice

In this stage students will do a creative writing.

### Activity 7. Rewriting the ending

Students will rewrite the ending of the scene with the aim to reflect on how that characters could have acted differently having in mind the sociocultural standards of the time. See figure 17.

Rewrite the ending of this scene. (e.g Perhaps Queenie and Bernard decide to keep the baby and they...)

Figure 17: Creative writing.

### **3.2 Activities for the extract of “American History” by J. Ortiz Cofer.**

The American author Judith Ortiz Cofer is often described as a Latina writer due to her Puerto Rican heritage and her focus on the Hispanic experience in her work. Her short story "American History" is set in the early 1960s, when racism and segregation in America were at their height. Elena is the protagonist, a fourteen-year-old Puerto Rican immigrant living with her family in Paterson, New Jersey, when President John F. Kennedy is assassinated. Despite this tragic event, Elena is focused on Eugene, a new boy in her class who lives across her neighborhood. Elena secretly has a crush on him, they both share a love for books. When Elena visits Eugene that evening, for a study date, she experiences her own personal tragedy in the form of prejudice. I thought that as the narrator is a teenage girl then students in secondary school could identify with her, making it easier for them to connect emotionally to the text.

This lesson plan (see table 26) also follows the guidelines from a Pedagogical application of the model of teaching critical thinking skills through literature (Bobkina & Stefanova, 2016). Students will read an excerpt from “American History” (ANNEX 2) and carry out these activities.

Table 26: Work Plan for section: 3.2 Activities for the excerpt of “American History” by J. Ortiz Cofer.

Analysing an excerpt from “American History” by J. Ortiz Cofer	
Activities	Procedure/Material
Activity 1: Warm-up: Thinking about immigration.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Individual work</li> <li>• Worksheet</li> <li>• Projector to see the videos</li> </ul>
Activity 2: Understanding the general message and analysing language details in “American History” by Ortiz Cofer.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Individual work</li> <li>• Excerpt “American History” (ANNEX 3)</li> <li>• Worksheet</li> </ul>
Activity 3: Connecting language with its social context.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Individual work</li> <li>• Excerpt “American History” (ANNEX 3)</li> <li>• Worksheet</li> </ul>
Activity 4: Creative writing. Rewrite a scene from the short story and role-play.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Individual work/small groups (role-play).</li> <li>• Notebook</li> </ul>

**Stage I: Overt instruction.**

This stage consists of a pre-reading activity to recall previous knowledge on the excerpt they will be reading for the following activity.

**Activity 1: Warm-up: Thinking about immigration.**

This activity will help students reflect on possible preconceived opinions of immigrants. The word “immigrant” is often charged with negative connotations, as they will see in the first video, “Americans React to Hearing the Word Immigrant”, or assigned to a determined ethnic group, in the case of the United States this would be “Mexicans”. In the second video, “100 Years of Immigration to The U.S., 1919 to 2019”, students will see migratory groups by country to the United States over the past century. Perhaps students associate migration with what are considered as undeveloped countries, however in the video they will see that Europeans also migrated in masses between the 1920s and 1960s. The teacher can explain that many Europeans migrated due to the two World Wars. This could be related to the refugees that arrive to Europe escaping the war in Syria. The last

question of the worksheet asks students to write down the top five migrant groups to the U.S in 2019, amongst them is Puerto Rico, this will open the discussion for the excerpt they are about to read. The first two questions of this activity (Table 27) are based on the first stage of the lesson plan designed by Bobkina and Stefanova (2017).

Table 27: Activity 1. Thinking about immigration.

What is the first word you think of when you hear the word “immigrant”?
Click on the following link <a href="https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=doIMrPRFtEw">https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=doIMrPRFtEw</a> and watch the youtube video “Americans React To Hearing The Word Immigrant”
After watching the video “Americans React to Hearing the Word Immigrant”, write down three (3) words that people answer to the question “what is the first word you think of when you hear the word “immigrant”? Compare your answer from question 1 to the answers of the people in the video. Click on the following link <a href="https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=GIJg2h2NrTM">https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=GIJg2h2NrTM</a> and watch the youtube video “100 Years of Immigration to The U.S., 1919 to 2019”
Check the video “100 Years of Immigration to The U.S., 1919 to 2019” and write down the answer to the following question: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Which continent do the majority of countries that appear as the largest U.S immigrant groups between <b>1919 and 1960</b> belong to (e.g Africa, America, Asia, Europe or Oceania)? (between minute 0 and minute 1:40 approximately).</li> </ul>
Check the video “100 Years of Immigration to The U.S., 1919 to 2019” and write down the top five (5) countries that appear as the largest U.S immigrant groups in <b>2019</b> . (minute 3:38 approximately).

## Stage II: Overt instruction

In this stage students will conceptualise with theory about the intercultural relations between immigrants of Hispanic heritage in America and white American citizens.

### Activity 2: Understanding the general message and analysing language details in “American History” by Ortiz Cofer.

After reading the excerpt, with a vocabulary list included (ANNEX 2), students answer the following comprehension questions (see table 28), which will guide



them through a close reading of the text to understand the inner logic and analyse details. They are multiple choice, I thought this would be more appropriate for lower levels of EFL in secondary schools. However, if the teacher wants to make them more challenging for higher levels the questions could be open-answer.

Table 28: Activity 2. Understanding the general message and analysing language details in “American History” by Ortiz Cofer.

<b>Answer the following questions according to the text The letters of each question are marked in the text to help you find/reflect on the answer.</b>
<p><b>(A)</b> Why do you believe Elena’s mother warns her not to go to Eugene’s house because she is “heading for humiliation and pain”?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. Because she is worried that Elena will get lost on the way to Eugene’s house.</li> <li>b. Because she is worried that his family will be prejudiced* against her.</li> <li>c. Because she is worried that Elena will miss church.</li> </ul> <p>*Prejudiced: showing an unreasonable dislike for something or someone.</p>
<p><b>(B)</b> Why do you think Elena’s apartment block is called “<i>El Building</i>”?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. Because a lot of Chinese people live there.</li> <li>b. Because a lot of Irish people live there.</li> <li>c. Because a lot of Latin American people live there.</li> </ul>
<p><b>(C)</b> What do you believe are the main reasons for mass immigration of these different communities of people (“<i>the Italians, the Irish, the Jews, the Puerto Ricans</i>”) to the United States of America? More than one option can be correct.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. They were looking for better life opportunities.</li> <li>b. They wanted to live in a country with better weather conditions.</li> <li>c. They were escaping war in their home countries.</li> </ul>
<p><b>(D)</b> What do you think Eugene’s mother means when she says “<i>I don’t know how you people do it.</i>”?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. She is impressed how hard-working Puerto Rican people are.</li> <li>b. She is impressed how well Elena can speak English.</li> <li>c. She dislikes the Puerto Rican community living across her neighbourhood in their ugly building</li> </ul>
<p><b>(E)</b> Do you think Eugene’s mother was being sincere when she said to Elena “<i>He cannot study with you. It’s nothing personal. You understand?</i>”</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. Yes.</li> <li>b. No.</li> </ul>
<p><b>(F)</b> If you answered “No” to the previous question, why do you think Eugene’s mother would lie to Elena about Eugene not needing to study with her?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. Because she is worried that her son Eugene will make friends and they will not be staying long in Paterson.</li> <li>b. Because her son Eugene is very intelligent and he does not need to study.</li> <li>c. Because she is prejudiced against Puerto Rican people, therefore she does not want her son Eugene to be friends with a Puerto Rican girl.</li> </ul>
<p><b>(G)</b> Which word is a synonym for the word “<i>solace</i>”?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. Comfort</li> <li>b. Fun</li> <li>c. entertainment</li> </ul>
<p><b>(H)</b> Who are Elena’s parents referring to when she says they are talking about “<i>the young widow and her two children</i>”?</p>

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. President J. F. Kennedy's wife and children.</li> <li>b. Their cousin's wife and children.</li> <li>c. The neighbour's wife and children.</li> </ul>
<p><b>(I)</b> Elena describes the cultural tradition of <i>luto</i> (in English it is called <i>mourning</i>). Which of the following actions does NOT apply to the cultural tradition of keeping <i>luto</i>?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. Wearing black clothes.</li> <li>b. Playing loud music.</li> <li>c. Being very silent.</li> </ul>
<p><b>(J)</b> While the nation grieves* for the death of its president, Elena must deal with another kind of grief*. What bitter* lesson has Elena learned?</p> <p>*Grieve=<i>Lamentar</i>. *Grief = <i>dolor, pena</i>. *bitter = <i>amargo</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. Elena has learned that she is not smart enough to be friends with Eugene.</li> <li>b. Elena has learned that she will not be able to study for her exam.</li> <li>c. Elena has learned that, because of her Puerto Rican origins, some people will be prejudiced towards her.</li> </ul>

### Stage III: Critical framing

In this stage students will do an activity to analyse the connection between language and its social context from a critical intercultural standpoint.

#### Activity 3: Connecting language with its social context.

This activity (see table 29) will help students associate Elena's description of her apartment building and her side of town in contrast with Eugene's house and part of the neighborhood. Her use of language clearly reflects that she is ashamed of her building. The second question asks students to look for the use of Spanish words in the texts, this reflects the Hispanic immigrants use of the linguistic variety "Spanglish".

I walked out to the street and around the chain-link fence that separated El Building from Eugene's house. The yard was neatly edged around the little walk that led to the door. It always amazed me how Paterson, the inner core of the city, had no apparent logic to its architecture. Small, neat single residences like this one could be found right next to huge, dilapidated apartment buildings like El Building. My guess was that the little houses had been there first, then the immigrants had come in droves, and the monstrosities had been raised for them—the Italians,

the Irish, the Jews, and now us, the Puerto Ricans and the blacks. The door was painted a deep green: *verde*, the color of hope.” (p.78)

““You live there?” She pointed up to El Building, which looked particularly ugly, like a gray prison, with its many dirty windows and rusty fire escapes. (p.79).

**Table 29: Activity 3. Connecting language with its social context**

Pair work: You and your partner each draw a picture of Elena's neighborhood as she describes it in this short story. Then compare each of your interpretations. Show the two pictures to your class. Ask your classmates how their impressions of Elena's neighborhood might be similar or different. Classify the vocabulary she used to describe her building compared to Eugene's house.
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Find examples of the use of Spanish expressions in the text.
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#### **Stage IV: Transformed practice**

In this stage students will do a creative writing from a different characters point of view.

#### **Activity 4: Creative writing. Rewrite a scene from the short story and role-play**

With this activity (see table 30), students will be asked to reverse the scene, that is, Eugene would be visiting Elena's home to study with her instead. They will have to rewrite the scene to imagine the situation from another character's point of view and imagine and how Elena's mother would receive him and reflect on the reasons why it would probably be a very different situation, having in mind the social hierarchy established in American society. Then, in groups they could role-play their writings in small groups in front of the class to practice their speaking skills.

**Table 30. Activity 4. Rewriting a scene and role-play.**

Imagine that in the story Eugene went to Elena's home to study. How do you think Elena's mother would receive him? Would she let him come inside the apartment to study with Elena? Write a dialogue between the characters as if it were a play.
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Students **role-play** their writings in front of the class.

#### **4. Conclusion**

This dissertation is a didactic proposal for enhancing the Intercultural Competence through authentic excerpts of English literature for EFL learner's in upper-secondary school in the Balearic Islands. The activities were based on pedagogical methods of two theorists; Bobkina & Stefanova's (2016) Model of Teaching Critical Thinking Skills through Literature and Hoff's (2016) Model of the Intercultural Reader (MIR). Both pedagogical practices were applied in upper-secondary school in the EFL classroom, the former in Spain and the latter in Norway, both with positive results for enhance intercultural awareness and IC.

The choice of texts for the activities were *Small Island*, by Andrea Levy, and "American History", by J. Ortiz Cofer. The reason for choosing these works were the social issues, such as immigration, prejudice and oppression, portrayed in them. In the ever-growing multicultural and globalized world that we live in it is essential that students acquire an intercultural understanding of such themes. Culture and identity are not static and confined to one nation, they evolve and transfer just like the characters in the works. Culture and social orders are also defined by history, which is why many activities are related to historical research in order to understand the contexts of the works.

The use of fiction allows students to engage with the text on a cognitive and an emotional level, even if the themes and characters may be unrelated to their daily life, they can see the world through the eyes of someone else and reflect on their cultural and social experiences. Authentic FL texts may be challenging, but conflict and misunderstanding also form part of the Intercultural communication process. The critical thinking activities should open discussion in the classroom which could lead to students questioning inherent prejudices or beliefs, questioning their

cultural assumptions and opening up to the understanding of otherness.

To sum it up, the proposal of classroom activities through a four-staged process using FL literature aims to develop IC. The revision of literary theory in the field of IC and literature in FL education shows that this practice is beneficial on multiple levels for learner's language and cognitive abilities. It is time that FL teachers trespass the boundaries of linguistic and communicative objectives to explore pedagogical applications to form intercultural learners.

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## ANNEX 1

**Read the character's description and write down at least five traits that describe her.**

### **Hortense Roberts : Description:**

Hortense was born in Jamaica. She has grown up believing she is destined for a golden life. She considers herself to be a cut above most of the other islanders because she has skin 'the colour of warm honey', is the daughter of Lovell Roberts ('a man of class'), has perfect diction and manners, and has been educated to be a teacher. She is very haughty, proud, and somewhat naive. She has an early disappointment in Jamaica when she can only get a job teaching the dark-skinned children of Half Way Tree Parish School with their 'wretched black faces' rather than the 'polite, clean and well-spoken pupils' from 'good families' she had hoped for, who also happen to be "fair-skinned". However, it is her experience of coming to Britain that is the biggest letdown. A reviewer describes Hortense's shock at the ugliness of racist Britain, a place where her fair skin, white gloves and college education count for nothing, as 'both hilarious and woeful', making her 'a character you love to hate — or, more accurately, enjoy being exasperated by'. At first offended by what she sees as the coarseness and ignorance of her husband, by the end of the novel she has grown to love him. A reviewer described this 'slow development of Hortense's respect for her husband as she begins to understand the challenges he faces' as 'one of the most moving aspects of the book'.

<b>Hortense is....</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>● <b>Haughty</b></li><li>● <b>Educated</b></li><li>● <b>A teacher</b></li><li>● ....</li></ul>
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**Read the following extract carefully and:**

- annotate any interesting use of language in the extract
- make a list of what seem to be typical language features of the narrator
- note any of the narrators' attitude the extract convey
- note any style features e.g. hindsight, free indirect speech.

**Hortense: Narrating voice**

But when I pressed this doorbell I did not hear a ring. No ding-a-ling, ding-a-ling. I pressed once more in case the bell was not operational. The house, I could see, was shabby. Mark you, shabby in a grand sort of a way. I was sure this house could once have been home to a doctor or a lawyer or perhaps a friend of a friend of the King... I stepped back down two steps avoiding a small lump of dog's business that rested in some litter and leaves. I straightened my coat, pulling it close where I had unfortunately lost a button. (p.12)

**Read the character's description and write down at least five traits that describe her.**

**Queenie Bligh: Description.**

Queenie is a blonde-haired British woman with very blue eyes. Growing up, Queenie, like Hortense, believed she was destined for a superior life. She was not like the dirty, common miners' children in the village, being the daughter of a butcher, and her 'posh' Aunt Dorothy had taken her off to London so she could learn deportment and elocution and thereby make a good marriage. Like Hortense, too, Queenie soon learns there are limitations to what life can offer her and, on her aunt's death, marries the tedious Bernard in order to remain in London instead of returning home to the 'stinking' farm. Queenie is warm-hearted and gregarious, feeling sorry for the bombed-out East Enders who are snubbed by her neighbours and taking in Jamaican lodgers after the war, but she is also pragmatic, charging Gilbert and his friends more than their rooms are worth. A reviewer said that Queenie's 'cultural ignorance and insensitivity are hard to ignore', but added that unlike other characters encountered in the book she was 'More tactless than malicious'. She is open minded, curious and outspoken.

Queenie is....	
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**Read the following extract carefully and:**

- annotate any interesting use of language in the extract
- make a list of what seem to be typical language features of the narrator
- note any of the narrators' attitude the extract conveys
- note any style features e.g. hindsight, free indirect speech.

### Queenie Bligh: Narrating Voice

I bet he did. He'd have told that horrible sister of his that more coloureds had just turned up. How many is it now? they'd have said to each other. Fifty? Sixty? 'You'll have to speak to her, Cyril,' she'd have told him, before bemoaning how respectable this street was before they came. They'd have got all those words out – decent, proper – polished them up and made them shine, before blaming Mrs Queenie Bligh for single handedly ruining the country. They were the same during the war, although even they couldn't blame me for that. Too many Poles... (p.112)

**Read the character's description and write down at least five traits that describe him**

### Gilbert: Description

Gilbert is a Jamaican man who marries Hortense before moving to England. Through his narration Gilbert proves to be a man of honour, humour, insight and generosity. A privately educated son of a Christian convert, Gilbert is a man who has quickly learnt to scale down his big dreams to fit his circumstances. This has not been achieved without some regret: his ideas soar so high above his lowly station he can see them 'lamenting and waving goodbye'. His experience with racism in the British Royal Air Force during the war and after he migrates to England mark him but he rejects to bow his head to white supremacy. He may seem a bit of a buffoon to Hortense, but he has hidden depths and hidden strengths, which are gradually revealed to her once she joins him in London.

Gilbert is...	•
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**Read the following extract carefully and:**

- annotate any interesting use of language in the extract
- make a list of what seem to be typical language features of each narrator
- note any of the narrators' attitudes the extract conveys

- note any style features e.g. hindsight, free indirect speech.

### **Gilbert: Narrating voice.**

Cha! Would you believe the gas choose that moment to run out? I know I have a shilling somewhere, but where? Searching my pocket I say, 'Oh, I just have to find the money for the gas meter.' It then I notice my shirt was not buttoned properly. I had not done up a garment so feeble since I was a small boy – me shirt hanging out like a vagabond's. And now she is watching me, her wide brown eyes as alert as a cobra's. If I change the button on the shirt I will look like I am undressing. And this, experience tells me, would alarm her. So I just tuck the shirt in me pants like this mishap is a new London fashion. (p. 26)

### **Hindsight - Gilbert**

You see, most of the boys were looking upwards. Their feet might have been stepping on London soil for the first time – their shaking sea legs wobbling them on the steadfast land – but it was wonder that lifted their eyes. They finally arrive in London Town. And, let me tell you, the Mother Country – this thought-I-knew-you place – was bewildering these Jamaican boys.... Come, they had never seen houses so tall, all the same. And what is that? A chimney? They have fire in their house in England? No! And why everything look so dowdy? (p. 212)

**Read the character's description and write down at least five traits that describe him**

### **Bernard: Description**

At first, Bernard is depicted as simply a banker with no heart. He marries Queenie but they have marriage problems from the start due to his lack of communication and affection. Bernard, like Gilbert, is a man who has returned from the war to find the old world he knew has shrunk beyond recognition. In an interview, Andrea Levy referred to him 'coming back and feeling a kind of redundancy'. It is this confusion and feeling of inadequacy that gives his character a sympathetic side, despite his racism and selfishness. He is a dull man with irritating habits who rarely speaks and who had never done anything interesting in his life until the war came. He hopes he might become a hero and enjoys the camaraderie of being part of a team, never realising that he is a figure of fun to the younger men in his company. But toward the end of the book, while Bernard is at war in India, he comes to life. He exhibits a strong sense of loyalty to the men with whom he is

serving and is deeply affected when they are killed. Although he is grossly prejudiced, he even has a change of heart towards the end of the book.

**Read the following extract carefully and:**

- annotate any interesting use of language in the extract
- make a list of what seem to be typical language features of the narrator
- note any of the narrators' attitude the extract conveys
- note any style features e.g. hindsight, free indirect speech.

**Bernard: Narrating voice**

They came through the train windows. Faces. Fingers. Hands. Arms. Hustling and shoving. Clutching useless items. Yelling to be seen. 'Sahib, take – you like? Take, sahib.' Most things were no more than a shape to me. Should I eat it, play it or rub it on my prickly heat? (p. 343)

Cheeky blighter had me lost for words. 'You deserve... you deserve!' What he deserved was to be thrown on to the street. Him and all the other ungrateful swine. He came towards me then. Eyes bulging like a savage's. (p. 470)

## ANNEX 2

### 1. Read the vocabulary list from the excerpt of the short story *American History* By Judith Ortiz Cofer.

<p><b>Lipstick:</b> Pintalabios.</p> <p><b>Storm warning:</b> Alerta de tormentas</p> <p><b>Issued:</b> Expedido</p> <p><b>Disbelief:</b> Incredulidad.</p> <p><b>Clutched:</b> Agarrar algo</p> <p><b>Embrace:</b> Abrazo</p> <p><b>Comfort:</b> Reconfortar</p> <p><b>Distraught:</b> Angustiado</p> <p><b>Staring:</b> Observando, mirar fijamente.</p> <p><b>Heading:</b> Ir hacia</p> <p><b>Humiliation:</b> Humillación</p> <p><b>Pain:</b> Dolor</p> <p><b>Resigned:</b> Resignado</p> <p><b>Handkerchief:</b> Pañuelo</p> <p><b>Chain-link:</b> Encadenado</p> <p><b>Yard:</b> Patio</p> <p><b>Inner core:</b> Nucleo interno</p> <p><b>Dilapidated:</b> Deteriorado</p> <p><b>In droves:</b> Masivamente</p> <p><b>Monstrosities:</b> Monstruosidades</p> <p><b>Suspenseful:</b> Suspenso</p> <p><b>Door opened a crack:</b> Entreabrió la puerta</p> <p><b>Swollen:</b> Hinchado</p> <p><b>Halo:</b> Aureola</p> <p><b>Ivory:</b> Márfil (color)</p>	<p><b>Warped:</b></p> <p><b>Tone:</b> Tono</p> <p><b>Friendly:</b> Amistoso</p> <p><b>Thrust:</b> Empujar</p> <p><b>Silly:</b> Tonto</p> <p><b>Gesture:</b> Gesto</p> <p><b>Prison:</b> Cárcel</p> <p><b>Rusty fire escape:</b> Escalera de incendios oxidado</p> <p><b>Nurse:</b> Enfermera</p> <p><b>Name tag:</b> Etiqueta identificador</p> <p><b>Intently:</b> Intensamente</p> <p><b>Get close to people:</b> Encariñarse</p> <p><b>Shock:</b> Asombro</p> <p><b>honey-drenched voice:</b> Voz dulce</p> <p><b>I Snapped out of my trance:</b> Desperté de mi trance</p> <p><b>Solace:</b> Consuelo</p> <p><b>Shift:</b> Turno</p> <p><b>Widow:</b> Vuida</p>
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<p>Freckles: Pecas</p> <p>Smudged: Manchado</p>	<p>Restraint: Moderación</p> <p>Source: Fuente</p> <p>Lace Veil: Velo de encaje</p>
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## 2. Read the extract of the short story *American History* By Judith Ortiz

### Cofer.

In the next thirty minutes I changed clothes, put on a little pink **lipstick**, and got my books together. Then I went in to tell my mother that I was going to a friend's house to study. I did not expect her reaction. "You are going out today?" The way she said "today" sounded as if a **storm warning** had been **issued**. It was said in utter **disbelief**. Before I could answer, she came toward me and held my elbows as I **clutched** my books.

"*Hija*, the president has been killed **(1)**. We must show respect. He was a great man. Come to church with me tonight." She tried to **embrace** me, but my books were in the way. My first impulse was to **comfort** her, she seemed so **distraught**, but I had to meet Eugene in fifteen minutes. "I have a test to study for, Mama. I will be home by eight." "You are forgetting who you are, *Niña*. I have seen you **staring** down at that boy's house. You are **heading** for **humiliation** and **pain**." My mother said this in Spanish and in a **resigned** tone that surprised me, as if she had no intention of stopping me from "heading for humiliation and pain." I started for the door. She sat in front of the TV holding a white **handkerchief** to her face **(A)**. I walked out to the street and around the **chain-link** fence that separated El Building **(B)** from Eugene's house. The **yard** was **neatly** edged around the little walk that led to the door. It always amazed me how Paterson **(2)**, the **inner core** of the city, had no apparent logic to its architecture. Small, neat single residences like this

one could be found right next to huge, **dilapidated** apartment buildings like El Building. My guess was that the little houses had been there first, then the immigrants had come in **droves**, and the **monstrosities** had been raised for them—the Italians, the Irish, the Jews, and now us, the Puerto Ricans and the blacks **(C)**. The door was painted a deep green: *verde*, the color of hope. I had heard my mother say it: *verde-esperanza*.

I knocked softly. A few **suspenseful** moments later the door opened just a **crack**. The red, **swollen** face of a woman appeared. She had a **halo** of red hair floating over a delicate **ivory** face—the face of a doll—with **freckles** on the nose. Her **smudged** eye makeup made her look unreal to me, like a mannequin seen through a **warped** store window. “What do you want?” Her voice was tiny and sweet sounding, like a little girl’s, but her **tone** was not **friendly**.

“I’m Eugene’s friend. He asked me over. To study.” I **thrust** out my books, a **silly gesture** that embarrassed me almost immediately. “You live there?” She pointed up to El Building, which looked particularly ugly, like a gray **prison**, with its many dirty windows and **rusty fire escapes**. The woman had stepped halfway out and I could see that she wore a white **nurse’s** uniform with “St. Joseph’s Hospital” on the **name tag**. “Yes. I do.” She looked **intently** at me for a couple of heartbeats, then said as if to herself, “I don’t know how you people do it.” **(D)** Then directly to me: “Listen. Honey. Eugene doesn’t want to study with you. He is a smart boy. Doesn’t need help. You understand me. I am truly sorry if he told you you could come over. He cannot study with you. It’s nothing personal. You understand? We won’t be in this place much longer, no need for him to **get close to people** —it’ll just make it harder for him later. Run back home now.” I couldn’t move. I just stood there in **shock** at hearing these things said to me in such a **honey-drenched** voice. I had never heard an accent like hers, except for Eugene’s softer version **(3)**. It was as if she were singing me a little song. “What’s wrong? Didn’t you hear what I said?” **(E)** She seemed very angry, and I finally **snapped out of my trance** **(F)**. I turned away from the green door and heard her close it gently. Our apartment was

empty when I got home. My mother was in someone else's kitchen, seeking the **solace** she needed **(G)**. Father would come in from his late **shift** at midnight. I would hear them talking softly in the kitchen for hours that night. They would not discuss their dreams for the future, or life in Puerto Rico, as they often did; that night they would talk sadly about the young **widow** and her two children, as if they were family **(H)**. For the next few days, we would observe *luto* in our apartment; that is, we would practice **restraint** and silence—no loud music or laughter. Some of the women of El Building would wear black for weeks **(I)**.

That night, I lay in my bed trying to feel the right thing for our dead president. But the tears that came up from a deep **source** inside me were strictly for me. When my mother came to the door, I pretended to be sleeping. Sometime during the night, I saw from my bed the streetlight come on. It had a pink halo around it. I went to my window and pressed my face to the cool glass. Looking up at the light, I could see the white snow falling like a **lace veil** over its face. I did not look down to see it turning gray as it touched the ground below. **(J)**

Slight adaptation of “American History” from *The Latin Deli: Prose and Poetry* by Judith Ortiz Cofer. Copyright © 1993 by Judith Ortiz Cofer.

- (1)** Refers to J. F. Kennedy, president of the United States of America (USA) from January 1961 until his assassination in November 1963.
- (2)** Paterson is a city in the state of New Jersey, in the United States of America (USA).
- (3)** Eugene and his mother are from South Georgia, a city in the south of the United States of America, that is why they have a different accent from the people who are from New Jersey.

