

SHOULD ENGLISH LITERATURE BE STUDIED IN AN EFL COURSE? LITHUANIAN EFL STUDENTS' OPINIONS

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Research purpose. Courses of general English aim to focus on all the language skills in order to prepare students for successful communication in the world outside the classroom. However, in such courses usually there is no time left for cultural topics, which are useful and necessary for good communicators. Literature from and about English-speaking countries is not an exception, so it is focused on and covered only in the study programme of English Philology or higher level English courses that are specialised and elective rather than obligatory at Vytautas Magnus University (VMU). This small-scale study intended to learn Lithuanian university EFL students' opinion about the topic of literature in their course of general English at upper-intermediate level taught at VMU.

Keywords: EFL, Literature, Student Opinions; University Students

Research Methodology. The study employed an online survey and was both quantitative and qualitative. It also used thematic analysis to process the received qualitative data.

Results / Findings. The findings reveal that the students think the topic of communication is the most important for them, but literature in their EFL course is as important as the topics of transport and environment that are also taught. Thematic analysis of open-ended answers shows that for the study participants English literature is interesting, helps to learn English vocabulary and express their ideas in writing better. Consequently, they believe it should be taught in their EFL but is not. On the other hand, only 17.6% of the students read fiction in English outside the classroom, while 35.5% read scientific literature/ academic literature in English.

Originality / Practical implications. Previous studies show that English literature is a useful teaching tool in EFL classrooms all over the world. As in the present study indicates, Lithuanian university students also see its benefits and express a wish for it to be taught in their courses of general English. Thus, students' opinion should be taken into account while deciding on their course components, since it may improve their motivation to study and learn more.