Emotions in Reading in English as a Foreign Language

Matijaš, Marija

Master's thesis / Diplomski rad

2023

Degree Grantor / Ustanova koja je dodijelila akademski / stručni stupanj: **University of Zagreb, Faculty of Teacher Education / Sveučilište u Zagrebu, Učiteljski fakultet**

Permanent link / Trajna poveznica: https://urn.nsk.hr/urn:nbn:hr:147:738599

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Download date / Datum preuzimanja: **2024-11-20**

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izv. prof. dr. sc. Kristina Cergol

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ABSTRACT

Reading is not only a skill one may possess but also an activity many partake in to elevate their mood or escape their reality. This is not surprising since reading has been used as a form of therapy for centuries.

The aim of this thesis was to research how reading in English as a foreign language affects an individual's emotions. Eleven participants (N = 11) come from eight different countries (Belgium, Brazil, Germany, the Netherlands, Poland, Serbia, Slovakia and the United States of America), are all fluent in their reading in English. English is not their mother tongue. All participants are members of an online book club. Firstly, we tried to find out how English as a foreign language helps one deal with their personal problems. The second question we tried to answer was whether reading in English as a foreign language helps one escape their own reality. Furthermore, we researched if reading in English as a foreign language changes one's mood for the better. And finally, we tried to determine if there are differences between reading in a foreign language and a mother tongue.

These eleven participants were required to fill out three forms. One form, the entry form, was meant to be filled out once in order to gain some general information on the participants. The other two forms, the pre-reading and post-reading forms, were meant to be filled out before and after five reading sessions. Those sessions occured at whichever time and for however long the participants chose over the course of one month.

The results were not conclusive, as the research was done on a small sample of participants. However, we found that reading in English as a foreign language helps people deal with their personal problems by finding inspiration in the novel they are reading, or simply by offering them escapism. Moreover, the majority of the participants demonstrated elevated moods after their reading sessions. Finally, a large number of participants expressed that they prefer reading original texts in English as opposed to translations into their mother tongues. These findings may benefit teachers of English as a second language as they offer a small insight into benefits of becoming fluent in reading in English.

Key words: reading, emotions, English language, teachers of English as a second language

SAŽETAK

Čitanje nije samo vještina koju neki posjeduju, već i aktivnost koju mnogi biraju kako bi popravili svoje raspoloženje ili pobjegli od vlastite stvarnosti. Ovo ne iznenađuje s obzirom da se čitanje koristi stoljećima kao jedna vrsta terapije.

Cilj ovog diplomskog rada bio je istražiti na koji način čitanje na engleskom kao stranom jeziku utječe na emocije pojedinca. Jedanaest sudionika istraživanja iz osam različitih država (Belgije, Brazila, Njemačke, Nizozemske, Poljske, Srbije, Slovačke i Sjedinjenih Američkih Država) su tečni u čitanju na engleskom jeziku. Osim toga, niti jednome od sudionika engleski nije materinji jezik. Svi sudionici su članovi online čitalačkog kluba. Prvo smo htjeli saznati kako čitanje na engleskom kao stranom jeziku pomaže pojedincu kod nošenja s osobnim problemima. Drugo pitanje pitanje na koje smo pokušali dati odgovor je pomaže li čitanje na engleskom kao stranom jeziku pojedincu kod bijega od stvarnosti. Nadalje, istražili smo mijenja li čitanje na engleskom kao stranom jeziku raspoloženje na bolje. U konačnici, pokušali smo zaključiti postoji li razlika između čitanja na stranom jeziku i na materinjem jeziku.

Ovih jedanaest sudionika trebalo je ispuniti tri formulara. Jedan od formulara bio je ulazni kojega su ispunjavali jednom kako bismo doznali neke općenite informacije o njima. Druga dva formulara ispunjavali su tijekom pet čitalačkih 'sesija', jedan prije čitanja i jedan poslije. Te 'sesije' su se događale tijekom jednog mjeseca kad su god to sudionici htjeli te su trajale onoliko dugo koliko bi sami odlučili.

S obzirom da je istraživanje napravljeno na malom uzorku, rezultati nisu definitivni. Međutim, uočili smo da čitanje na engleskom kao stranom jeziku pomaže ljudima kod nošenja s osobnim problemima kroz pronalaženje inspiracije u romanu kojega čitaju ili kroz sam 'bijeg' od stvarnosti. Nadalje, većina sudionika pokazala je poboljšano raspoloženje nakon čitanja. Naposljetku, veliki broj sudionika izrazio je da preferira čitanje originalnih tekstova na engleskom jeziku za razliku od njihovih prijevoda na njihove materinje jezike. Ovi zaključci mogu biti korisni učiteljima engleskog kao stranog jezika s obzirom da daju uvid u dobrobiti tečnosti u čitanju na engleskom jeziku.

Ključne riječi: čitanje, emocije, engleski jezik, učitelji engleskog kao stranog jezika

1 Introduction

Reading is a skill that most people who have ever been a part of any education system have mastered at one point or another. It is also an activity in which many people partake in order to relax and forget about their daily problems. Reading has been shown to help individuals deal with many different aspects of their lives, including mental health problems. It has been used as a medical treatment through religious texts from the thirteenth century Egypt until the modern day. The medical treatment through reading is also known as bibliotherapy.

People choose different media, and with that, books, to help them elevate their current mood. This is the study of mood management theory, which explains why individuals choose the media for their entertainment through mood optimization. That is, it would be expected that an individual would choose media that they anticipated would change their emotions and overall mood for the better. Moreover, reading as a form of entertainment can evoke various emotions in the reader since one can better control how they perceive the text they are reading as opposed to other media such as films, television shows, or video games.

Having said that, readers may often feel transported into the story world, feeling the emotions the characters are feeling and anticipating what will happen next in the story they are reading. This transportation to the world of the story may be described as escapism, which is not always seen as a positive thing but often helps individuals deal with their personal problems.

Escaping through narrative fiction may evoke a variety of emotions since it includes the reader, the text with its characters, the entire new world, as well as the author. Each reader may perceive and react to different pieces of text differently.

In this paper, we focused on researching how reading in English as a foreign language affects readers. The participants in the research were eleven members of an online book club, coming from eight different countries and having six different mother tongues. All participants are fluent in their reading in English and are between 21 and 31. We focused on finding various aspects of how reading in English as a foreign language affects the participants' everyday lives through five reading sessions for which they had to fill out ten different forms. Not only that, but we also wanted to see if there were any differences between reading in a foreign language and a mother tongue.

2 Bibliotherapy

Looking at its most basic meaning, bibliotherapy can be defined as "healing through books" since the word itself consists of two Greek words: *biblion*, which means books, and *therapeia*, which means healing (Horner, 2013). Bibliotherapy has been used for centuries, with the first documented case dating back to the thirteenth century in Egypt. Until the mid-nineteenth century, religious texts were the most commonly used reading materials in bibliotherapy. During World War I, bibliotherapy was used at the Alabama Military Hospital in the United States of America to help soldiers that arrived back home from war with their posttraumatic stress disorder, also known as PTSD (Stip et al., 2020). This was the first time bibliotherapy was identified as a medical treatment (Dysart-Gale, 2007). In the 1950s and 1960s, bibliotherapy was defined as a specialized, gradual, and planned therapy with three primary components: identification, catharsis, and insight. This definition was further developed in the 1970s and 1980s to encompass "self-actualization, self-help and education, and problem-solving application" (Lenkowsky, 1987). Nowadays, according to Stip et al. (2020), bibliotherapy can be defined as a method of problem-solving through guided reading that involves "identification, selection, presentation, and follow-up" It can be used by all individuals, regardless of their age or mental state. As Rahmat et al. (2021) conclude, "imaginary trips can be shared through literature. Bibliotherapy is a way to structure these trips in order to improve mental health resilience."

Even though it was originally created to treat depression, its use has expanded to also help with anxiety disorders, mood disorders, depressive episodes, and many other psychological and psychiatric conditions (Stip et al., 2020). Moreover, it has been shown that it aids in regulating stress and aggression as well as developing social relationships in children (Rahmat et al., 2021). According to Rahmat et al. (2021), there are four levels of bibliotherapy: intellectual, social, behavioural, and emotional. At the intellectual level, reading enables one to become knowledgeable about different problem-solving behaviours, while sharpening their sensitivity at the social level. Not only that, but individuals may be more confident when expressing their problems and become more aware of their emotions, which can result in being more willing to solve problems.

Another important factor to consider as a part of bibliotherapy, according to Bruneau and Pehrsson (2017), is the personalized selection process of the reading material, which has been shown to increase motivation for reading in participants. The selection process itself is unique for each participant, but it always begins with self-reflection (Bruneau & Pehrsson,

2017). It should be noted that there is not much research on the topic of self-selection of books for therapeutic purposes. However, Bruneau and Pehrsson (2017) found in their research on twenty-two participants who self-selected books to read for therapeutic purposes, that therapeutic benefits begin from the selection process alone, choosing the suitable book to read having the most impact on readers, while also making the reader feel empowered. An additional aspect that was communicated by the participants in this study was the importance of feeling ready to read. Moreover, participants' emotions during the book selection process had an impact on their reading experience as a whole. According to McLean and Kapell (2015), readers choose their reading material based on recommendations from people in their environment, while others turn to online and in-person bookstores. Genre is yet another part of the self-selecting process that should be considered (Bruneau and Pehrsson, 2017). When it comes to choosing fiction novels of one's liking, Horner (2013) suggests a trial-and-error approach through reading the book's blurb or reading a few pages to decide whether one wants to continue with the book. Moreover, they advise against feeling guilty about not continuing with a book. According to Bruneau and Pehrsson (2017), some authors also suggest rereading favourite novels, as well as evaluating those books they may have previously had a positive experience with. It is also suggested to consult guidebooks, alongside library and bookstore staff, book club members, and the internet.

3 Mood management theory

Mood management theory is one approach to understanding why people choose specific types of media to consume. Unlike some other theories, this one advocates mood optimization. That is, one's emotional state at any given point in time influences the media they opt for. It is based on the fundamental idea that people are driven to eliminate or relieve unpleasant emotions while maintaining and intensifying good emotions. In other words, one selects media in accordance with their hedonic needs. (Reinecke, 2016). When it comes to reading material and this specific theory, it can be anticipated that a person in a good mood would choose books that are either not disruptive to their mood or that help boost it. When it comes to individuals in a bad mood, it is expected that they will pick literature that might help them change the way they feel. Furthermore, loneliness is an aspect of one's life that may influence if an individual would seek out any form of media for the purpose of entertainment at all (Mar et al., 2011). Mar et. al (2011) propose an interesting question of existence of tragedy within narrative fiction, which mood-management theory has almost no explanation for.

4 Emotions in narrative fiction

It is not an unknown fact that anyone who reads different fiction novels can experience a plethora of emotions while reading. As Oatley (2002) states: "Fictional narrative has its impact primarily through emotions." According to Mar et al. (2011), emotions when reading are not limited merely to the amount of time spent reading but also to one's feelings before reading. This might explain why some individuals are not "in the mood" for particular works of literature. When it comes to emotions while reading, different aspects of one's personal life, including their memories, will have an impact on one's involvement with specific texts (Mar et al., 2011).

One distinction between narrative fiction and other types of entertainment, such as movies or music, is the ability to regulate the pace of enjoying the book and the fact that events in novels are conveyed symbolically, with language, rather than representationally, with visuals and sounds. As a result, when one reads, they might have a higher chance of controlling their emotional response since they may better control of how specific literary events are portrayed in their mind (Mar et al., 2011). Furthermore, narrative fiction differs from other forms of entertainment regarding the type of emotions it may elicit. On the one hand, there are narrative emotions, which are elicited when a person reads a novel and thus joins the fictional world of the provided story. Aesthetic feelings, on the other hand, are elicited when one practices admiration and appreciation for other works of art (Mar et al., 2011).
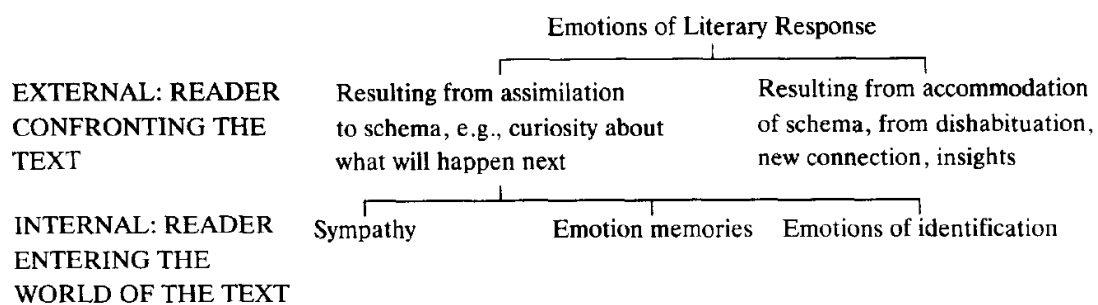
Picture 1: A taxonomic tree of five different emotions that occur in literary response (Oatley, 1994).

According to Mar et al. (2011), narrative emotions can be divided into five kinds: emotions of sympathy, emotions of identification, emotions of empathy, relived emotions, and remembered emotions. *Emotions of sympathy* can be explained as identifying a pattern of human experience or behaviour, perceiving how it relates to a character in the story, and hence feeling sympathy for them. In other words, a reader sympathizes with a character going through

a certain experience but does not feel as if it occurred to them. *Emotions of identification*, on the other hand, entail that a reader identifies with a character, resulting in feeling 'fresh emotions' produced by a new experience, in this case reading a new fictional tale. *Emotions of empathy* differ from those of sympathy and identification in that the reader does not necessarily identify with the character they are reading about, but they do empathize with them by evoking similar emotions as the protagonist is feeling without perceiving those emotions as their own. *Relived emotions* are linked to one's history and the situations that may have triggered them. Because not all emotions are experienced at the same time as particular events unfold, narrative fiction may allow the assimilation of suppressed emotions. Conversely, *remembered emotions* are not limited to personal experiences but to different instances of observing those events in which other people may have experienced a variety of different emotions. To understand remembered emotions, there should be a presence of enjoyment and appreciation.

5 Escapism

Escapism is a concept that may be characterized as the active avoidance of one's own problems by choosing to consume different types of media, such as television, video games, or fiction novels. Even though it may be perceived negatively, it is becoming more recognized as a basic human need. It is important to emphasize that escapism is simply one of many methods that each individual can choose to deal with life's issues and that utilizing media as an escape does not always imply extensive media use. Escapism involves both a strong *motivation to avoid,* as well as a strong *motivation to approach.* When it comes to the motivation to avoid, it is associated with the avoidance of anything that could result in one being troubled or feeling any form of negative emotion. Hence, one tends to avoid any media that could possibly trigger similar sentiments. On the other hand, the motivation to approach entails the will to consume those types of media that may help one feel distracted and whose mood will therefore be elevated (Hastall, 2017). When it comes to the media itself, Hastall (2017) states that in order to be able to experience escapism, it should be not only immersive, but also hedonistically rewarding. Moreover, various coping mechanisms are involved in escapism at the same time, such as cognitive avoidance, behavioural avoidance, emotional regulation, social withdrawal, wishful thinking, denial, and information seeking. These mechanisms are an essential part of any human's life (Hastall, 2017).

Even though the most researched escapist media are usually television, the Internet, as well as video games, there is also the notion of escapism in connection to leisure reading. Although most literature views escapism as a negative thing, Begum (2011) focuses on positive

effects of escapism by means of reading by claiming that escapism can also be part of the solution to one's problems. This is why it may be useful to differentiate between the functional escapism style and dysfunctional escapism style (Hastall, 2017).

Reading, just like any other medium, helps the reader disconnect from their own life, offering them not only relaxation, but also engaging them on an intellectual level. Although leisure reading can sometimes be looked down upon, as it often involves "lighter" novels, it is important to note the complexity of the reading itself since it involves not only the reader but also the text and its author, a trio that, during any new reading session, creates new meanings, hence a one-of-a kind reading experience. Despite the fact that the term escapism implies separation from reality, it can also be used to become connected with reality again, through reading. This is because readers frequently seek meaningful transformation rather than escapism through reading. Change cannot occur without confronting certain harsh realities in one's own life. When a reader connects with the text on both emotional and mental levels, they are able to "validate beliefs, reshape ambiguities, and ultimately forge a place in the spaces they occupy" (Begum, 2011).

6 Emotionality and foreign language

For those people who speak two languages at similar proficiency levels, with one being their first one to have been learnt, or rather, their first language or mother tongue, it is often reported, as Caldwell-Harris (2014) states, "…that swearing, praying, lying, and saying I love you feel differently when using a native rather than a foreign language." Moreover, two studies have shown that people make decisions that are more rational when they use their non-native tongue. One of the reasons for people feeling more emotional towards their mother tongue is the fact that it is learnt in an environment that is more emotional than that of the academic setting, which is often neutral when it comes to emotionality, and in which most second languages are acquired (Ivaz et al., 2016). Another reason for this is the fact that the mother tongue, or the language that was learnt earlier, develops at the same time as one's emotional regulation systems (Caldwell-Harris, 2014). To put it briefly, the difference in emotionality between mother tongue and foreign language lies in the distinct contexts in which they are usually acquired (Ivaz et al., 2016).

On the other hand, speakers of a foreign language may possibly feel emotions at the same or similar level as those of their mother tongue when certain conditions happen, namely an early age of acquisition and learning the language through immersion, both of which result in high proficiency (Caldwell-Harris, 2014). Another factor that may play a role in certain speakers having the same emotional level towards both languages is the similarity between the mother tongue and the second language (Ponari et al., 2015). Keysar et al. (2012) found in their study that people are less likely to be biased while making decisions in a foreign language, which may be because there is both more emotional and cognitive distance in the second language than in the mother tongue.

6.1. Narrative transportation

The majority of the research about emotionality differences between native and non-native tongues focused on single words, but there has been little research on how reading, listening, or watching a story in a non-native tongue influences one's engagement in these activities. In other words, there is not much focus on the concept of narrative transportation when it comes to non-native languages. Narrative transportation is a term that describes both cognitive and emotional engagement one has with a story they are reading, listening to, or watching. There are various processes interacting with one another when narrative transportation happens, such as losing oneself in the story world, strong emotions connected to the storyline and characters, as well as "vivid imagery of the plot and story world." It is measured using self-report, which consists of scales that measure emotional, cognitive, and imagery-based aspects. Cognitive aspects are, for instance, focused attention, while emotional aspects include different emotional reactions to the story. The presence of a vivid imagination of certain events is an example of an imagery-based aspect (Chung Fat-Yim et al., 2019). According to Chung Fat-Yim et al. (2019), those engaging with a story in their second language feel the same level of narrative transportation as those having the same experience in their mother tongue. In other words, when one engages with a story in their non-native language, they can experience the same level of cognition, attention, and emotions as if it were their first language.

7 Aim and research questions

The aim of this research is to determine how reading in English as a foreign language affects an individual's emotions. There are four research questions that this research tries to answer. How reading in English as a foreign language helps one deal with their personal

problems was the first research question. Secondly, we tried to find out whether reading in English as a foreign language helps one escape their own reality. Moreover, it was our goal to research if reading in English as a foreign language changes one's mood for the better. And our final research question was to determine if there are differences between reading in a foreign language and a mother tongue.

8 Methodology

8.1 Participants

The participants of this study were eleven members of an online book club, ten of whom identify as female, and one as nonbinary, coming from eight different countries. I will refer to the participants as: P1, P2, P3, P4, P5, P6, P7, P8, P9, P10 and P11. One participant comes from Brazil (P1), two from Germany (P2 and P3), two from Belgium (P6 and P8), one from the United States of America (P5), one from Slovakia (P7), one from Serbia (P9), one from the Netherlands (P10), and one from Poland (P11). Their mother tongues are, respectively, Portuguese (P1) German (P2 and P3), Dutch (P6, P8 and P10), Swedish (P4), Spanish (P5), Slovak (P7), Serbian (P9) and Polish (P11). All eleven participants are between 21 and 31 years old and are fluent in their reading in English.

Besides P5, who has lived in an English-speaking country since the age of 3, and P7, who has only lived in English-speaking countries for short periods of time, none of the other participants has ever lived in an English-speaking country. When it comes to the question of whether or not they used English in their studies, seven of the participants (P2, P3, P 4, P5, P6, P7, P9 and P10) reported having used English in their studies to some capacity, some of them even having their entire or almost entire university programme in English (P4, P6, P7, P10), while one participant studied English as one of their minors at the university (P9). Ten participants reported having studied English as a part of their official educational system either since kindergarten or primary school, while P1 reported never having learnt English officially, but through reading different pieces of text, also known as fanfiction, online. Moreover, P1, P3, P4, P5, P6, P7, P8, P9, P10, and P11 reported having used English actively for more than ten years, while P2 reported four to five years of active use of English. While nine participants reported that they rarely or never check the meaning of words while reading but rather try to figure it out from the context, P2 and P5 reported they do it often, with P5 stating they do it approximately every five pages of the book they are reading.

8.2. Instruments and procedure

Each participant was required to fill out three Google Forms: an entry form, a pre-reading form, and a post-reading form. The entry form consisted of informed consent and general questions about the participants. They had to fill it out once before starting with the pre-reading form and the post-reading form, and by filling it out, they consented to partaking in the research for the sole purpose of writing this thesis. They were also instructed to provide as many details as they wanted to for any given question. When it comes to the pre-reading form and the post-reading form, they were required to fill out both of them five times on five different days. The post-reading form had to be filled out each time before they started their reading session, which lasted for however long they wanted to, and the post-reading form had to be filled out right after they finished with their reading session each time.

Dear participant,

My name is Marija Matijaš and I am a fifth year student at the Faculty of Teacher Education, University of Zagreb. I am doing a research as a part of my Master's Thesis on the topic of *Emotions in Reading in English as a Foreign Language.* The aim of this research is to find out how reading in English as a foreign language effects individual's emotions.

If you consent to participate in this research, you will fill out 10 diary forms in the span of 5 reading sessions at your own convenience. The research will be conducted in the summer semester of the academic year 2022/2023.

The results of this research will be used for the aforementioned Master's Thesis and will be completely anonymous. The results will be saved on a computer with a password that only I am aware of and will not be shared with a third party, and will be destroyed after 5 years.

Please note, you are allowed to drop out from the research at any point in time, without any explanation or sanctions.

If you have any questions, feel free to contact me at any given time.

By reading this statement and filling out the entry form, you are giving your informed consent for participating in this research.

Thank you in advance.

Sincerely,

Marija Matijaš, e-mail: matijas.marija@gmail.com

Picture 2: First part of the entry form: informed consent

The questions in the entry form were:

- Please write your unique nickname and remember it. (This way the participants were able to stay anonymous.)
- Which country do you come from?
- What is your mother tongue?
- Please state your age.
- Please state your gender.
- How did you start learning English?
- How long have you been using English for?
- Have you ever lived in an English-speaking country?
- Have you ever used English in your studies? Please explain.
- When reading in English, how often do you check for the meaning of words?

The questions in the pre-reading form were:

- Please enter your unique nickname that you chose on the entry form.
- Please enter today's date.
- How are you feeling right now?
- Why are you feeling that way?
- Which book will you be reading?
- Why did you decide to read that book?
- Can you predict how you will feel after reading it? Please explain.ž

The questions in the post-reading form were:

- Please enter your unique nickname that you chose on the entry form.
- Please enter today's date.
- How long did you read for?
- Did you enjoy what you read?
- How did you feel while reading it? Why?
- Would you read the translation of this book? Why?
- Did this reading session made you forget any potential problems you have been experiencing?
- Did this reading session made you think of something in your own life?
- How are you feeling right now? Why?

9 Results and discussion

9.1. How does reading in English as a foreign language help one deal with personal problems?

Some people may choose to consume certain media in order to help them deal with their personal problems, and one of our research questions was exactly that. We wanted to see in what way reading in English as a foreign language helped participants deal with their personal problems.

When it comes to participants' personal problems, each had a variety of them, which they stated in their pre-reading forms, that is, in the form they filled out before the beginning of their reading sessions. Problems mentioned are: family issues, not having the time to read, lack of sleep and therefore energy for the day, stress over university workload, having an overall busy day or week, waking up too late, not being able to focus, being sick, experiencing problems with friends, and having some mental health problems.

When it comes to dealing with the problems they mentioned, some of the participants expressed that their reading sessions made them think of certain aspects of their life and even made them feel positive emotions about those aspects.

For instance, P1 explains how they could relate to the characters, which in turn gave them hope: "Being a queer person out in the world can be really hard sometimes and I could relate my experiences to the ones the magical creatures live through in the book. It gave me hope." In another one of their reading sessions, they expressed how the novel they had been reading helped them reflect on their personal experiences, even claiming the novel "has been a light at the end of the tunnel" for them. Over their first four sessions, P3 always expressed not thinking about any aspects of their life while reading, but after the last session they stated that some of the main character's struggles may have reminded them of their own life, but not actively. P4 expressed that reading is an important part of their life as it helps them with their mental health. P6 states that one of their reading sessions even helped them with the fatigue they had been feeling. Some of the participants also expressed that reading helped them relax after initially feeling tired or not in a good mood. P9 explained after one of their reading sessions that they gained a new perspective on problem-solving from the main character of the novel they had been reading and that they hope to implement it in their own life. One of P10's reading

sessions also put things into perspective for them as they realized they wanted to prioritize their health, as well as always be themselves. Moreover, they also came to certain realizations about cheating during one of their reading sessions: "…cheating was mentioned a lot in the chapters I just read and it made me think of how accepting I would be if my partner cheated on me. I don't think I would be as forgiving." As they explained it: "...it helped me put things into perspective and not see them as problems." One participant (P11) even expressed feeling less tired after one of their reading sessions.

Overall, it seems that at some points, reading in English as a foreign language leads each individual to their own way of dealing with and perceiving their personal problems. Moreover, some participants even gained new perspectives on certain aspects of their everyday lives and expressed hope. Even though there is no definitive answer on how reading in English as a foreign language helps one deal with their personal problems, it seems as if in some instances it leads certain individuals to new ways of thinking and helps them with their mental health, tiredness, and overall relaxation. This does not surprise, as bibliotherapy has been shown to help people on many levels and can be seen as a type of healing. Moreover, it has been shown to aid individuals in problem-solving, which P9 mentions as one of their realizations upon finishing reading (Rahmat et al., 2021). These findings may be useful for teachers of English as a second language because they could select those reading materials that cover certain topics that may be relatable to their students' problems. This way, the students could get another opportunity to come to terms with their personal problems and possibly find a solution or a helpful advice in a novel they are reading.

9.2. Does reading in English as a foreign language help one escape their own reality?

Considering the fact that escapism is one of many tools people can use to forget their own reality by involving themselves in a fictional story, we wanted to see if that was also true for reading in English as a foreign language (Hastall, 2017). As Begum (2011) states: "Escapism associated with leisure reading is an essential component of its overall appeal…" In connection to the previous research question, escapism can be seen as a solution to some people's problems, and with that, reading can be looked at as a form of functional escapism style (Hastall, 2017).

To find out whether or not the participants of this study experienced escapism while reading in English as a foreign language, they were asked whether that particular reading session made them forget any potential problems they had been experiencing after each of their

reading sessions. Each participant stated that they were able to forget their problems more than once. P2, P3, and P7 stated that they were able to forget their problems during each of their reading sessions. However, during their third reading session, P3 expressed that they were not able to forget about their problems for the entirety of their reading session. The same occurrence could be noticed for one of P8's reading sessions, where they stated that the particular reading session put their problems at the back of their mind, but this time it did not help them completely forget them. During one of their reading sessions, P3 even mentions that the novel they were reading offered them some escapism, further explaining why: "…it does offer some escapism with it being fantasy and easy to read." This participant also mentions, in another one of their post-reading forms, that the novel "…does invite you to escape into another world." This can be seen as one simple way of explaining escapism. "I felt escapism." was one way P4 replied to how they were feeling while reading, further explaining: "I felt like I was talking to the writer…" P9 also mentions and explains the notion of escaping from the real world through reading: "It was so fun and light-hearted and definitely a perfect escape from the real world problems." Furthermore, P1 describes their novel of choice as being able to completely distract them from some mental health problems they had been experiencing: "This book has been a great distraction during a terrible week mental health-wise. Even tired, I've found myself enjoying it fully." P6 explains that one of their reading sessions made them forget the outside world, while another reading session made them smile through tiredness. One reading session made P5 so gripped by the story that they "forgot about work completely".

Both P6 and P8 used the word "transported" when explaining that they were able to not think about their problems. This can be seen as the aforementioned narrative transportation, which is, among other aspects, characterized by one being lost in the story world of, in this case, the novel that they are reading (Chung Fat-Yim et al., 2019). It could also be said that when one is lost in the story world, they are immersed, which is how P9 and P3 explain the possibility of being transported from the real world. P3 explains that happened because they experienced the story world of the novel of their choosing as "so immersive", while P3 describes one of their reading sessions as "really immersive" While P4 does not use similar wording, their explanation of one of their reading sessions as "I was so into the book that it made me forget the world for a while" can be seen as feeling immersed in the story and thus experiencing escapism. Moreover, even though they (P4) were sick, they were able to forget everything from the world outside the story they were reading. The same participant also mentioned feeling "engrossed in the story," which can also be seen as one form of escapism, and with that narrative

transportation. On the other hand, some participants, in the course of some of their reading sessions, experienced the complete opposite of escapism. One participant was not able to forget their real-life problems because they were related to school (P5), while another participant (P4) could not get transported because, as they explain: "The book required so much brain power from me and it made me sad that I can't read it faster and just overall made my day a little worse."

To sum up, it could be noticed that each participant was able to forget their personal problems more than once in the course of their reading. This means that reading in English as a foreign language successfully made them experience escapism, through which they escaped their own reality and entered a fictional one. Even though there were some instances in which the participants expressed the opposite of escaping their own reality, they still succeeded in doing so during other reading sessions they had. Moreover, one important conclusion teachers of English as a foreign language can draw from these answers is the importance of providing their students with not only the choice to choose among different pieces of text but also to make sure those texts are appropriate for their level to avoid the unnecessary frustration that P4 experienced when the novel they were reading felt too challenging for them. This is especially important since it could be noticed that, even though they were reading in their non-native tongue, every participant felt escapism and narrative transportation. Therefore, it would be useful to allow that for learners of English as a second language as well.

9.3. Does reading in English as a foreign language change a person's mood (for the better)?

Since people experience a variety of emotions on a daily basis, some of them negative, such as sadness, anger, fear, or disgust, it was the aim of this research question to find out if reading in English as a foreign language changes any of those moods, hopefully for the better. As Oatley (1994) claims: "…an emotion is triggered by a noticeable event…" and every emotion is usually accompanied by various occurrences such as a faster heartbeat, tears, smiling, etc. When it comes to emotions and reading, one of the first noticeable aspects of someone having an emotional reaction to a piece of text is being able to enter the world of the story they are interacting with. This does not surprise since reading involves not only the reader but also the author and the story with its characters and storyline (Oatley, 1994). Moreover, emotions can influence the reading experience and its outcomes in a variety of ways, including not only cognition but also one's attitude (Pekrun, 2021). Therefore, this makes this research question interesting because one could expect a significant change in a person's reading habits considering all the aspects that play a role in the process of reading. To be able to find the

answer to this question, the participants were asked how they were feeling before reading, as well as why. We also asked them if they were able to predict how they would be feeling upon finishing their reading session to see if they implemented any of the mood management theory's claims. Furthermore, in their post-reading forms, they were asked to express their feelings during their reading session, as well as how they were feeling at that particular moment and why.

Before their first reading session, P1 felt anxious due to some personal issues, as well as worried that they wouldn't be able to focus and enjoy their reading experience. However, they predicted two possible scenarios for how they would feel upon finishing their reading session: "one where I feel happier and more relaxed," and the second scenario was not being able to read and therefore feeling even more anxious and needing to find another distraction. They did express hopefulness for experiencing positive emotions upon finishing with their reading , which eventually happened. They not only expressed feeling much better than before their reading session, but they also stated that this reading session reminded them of why they love reading in general. Even though they still felt anxious when they started reading, they eventually managed to "push through" and had an enjoyable reading experience, even stating that they were looking forward to reading more later in the day. On the other hand, before their second reading session, they felt "pretty good," and that feeling remained even after, which they also predicted considering they were reading the same novel they had the day before, and they already knew they would like it. They started their third reading session also in a good mood but ended up feeling tired and anxious due to various distractions, because of which they were not able to focus on the novel. Their fourth reading session started with them feeling tired, but in a positive mood, hoping to feel less tired and "have fun" during their reading session. Even though their prediction of feeling less tired did not come to fruition, they ended up feeling excited and motivated to continue reading when in a better mood. Finally, before their final reading session, they expressed feeling unmotivated to continue reading the book because they had not picked it up in a while. They still hoped to feel good, which they even accomplished this time. After this reading session, they once again expressed how much it reminded them of their love for reading in general, and they ended up being not only in a good mood, but also motivated, just like they predicted.

When it came to P2's first reading session, an interesting occurrence happened. Even though they felt great as well as excited about the novel they had been reading, even predicting that they would still feel great afterwards, they ended up feeling confused because they had

forgotten certain events from the novel and were unsure about the meaning of certain words. Furthermore, their second reading session started with them feeling tired, predicting they would "likely suffer with the main character and end up happy if everything turns out well", and ended up feeling emotional due to "feeling for the characters", but also excited to eventually continue with the novel of their choice. They continued to feel tired, stressed, or exhausted before each of their following three reading sessions. For each of the reading sessions, they predicted they would feel either relaxed, less stressed, or happy, and in each case, they successfully predicted the outcome. The only exception was their third reading session, during which they felt stressed because of university workload, and that reading session had not managed to completely relax them because they stated they were still "a little bit stressed" because "it's late and I still have university on my mind."

Before their first, second, and fourth reading sessions, P3 expressed feeling negative emotions like tiredness and feeling unmotivated. For the first reading session, they predicted feeling good about starting their workday since they were reading during their commute. During this particular reading session, they expressed feeling irritated due to certain choices made by the characters in the novel they were reading, but they ended up feeling relaxed due to liking the "escapism it offers and probably would like to continue with this rather than having to start working in a couple of moments". When it comes to their second reading session, even though tired, they expressed hopefulness to "fall back into reading again," because of which they predicted they would feel happy to continue reading the novel. Afterwards, they expressed feeling accomplished and interested in the story. Before their fourth reading session, when they felt unmotivated, they predicted that the reading session would "lift my mood a bit" and ended up feeling happy about reading again after a few days, but also feeling sad for the characters, as well as "still a bit tired and unmotivated". Before their third and fifth reading sessions, they claimed to have felt relaxed, calm (3), and good (4). Their prediction for their third reading session was that they would hopefully be really intrigued by the story and characters because they had been enjoying that book up until that point. Moreover, they once again expressed a hope to get back into the "reading mood". When it came to their fifth reading session, they predicted that they would continue feeling good, even though the novel they were reading had "a darker tone to it". They ended up feeling very immersed in the story, which kept their mood up. Not only that, but they expressed this was so because they were also enjoying the fantasy, romance, and writing style of the novel. This is where we can see how the reader interacts with

the author and the text as a whole, which in turn influences their mood in some capacity (Oatley, 1994).

While P4 felt "absent-minded and a little sad" due to feeling lonely, they had still chosen to read a book that could potentially have some elements that would not influence their emotions that "are not being that stable" in a positive way. However, they expressed that because the novel demands attention, it could possibly help them "feel better or at least distracted". Considering that, according to the mood management theory, loneliness may be a predictor of whether or not one chooses any form of entertainment at all, it is curious to notice that this participant chose a book that could potentially help them lift their mood or distract them (Mar et al., 2011). This is especially interesting because this particular participant expressed feeling less lonely due to feeling as if they "were talking to the writer, as well as feeling calm and tired upon completing their reading session. On the contrary, before one of their reading sessions, they were in a positive mood but predicted they would feel tired due to the novel being demanding and having "a lot of world-building and magic systems," which "require a lot of brain power for me to keep up with everything". Upon finishing this reading session, they felt not only disappointed but tired, just like they had predicted, while also expressing feeling "empty" and "a little sad" This was not the only reading session in which they expressed using too much "brain power". In another one, they were left "completely tired" due to having to use a lot of "brain power" and go back to certain parts to reread them. Not only did it make them tired but also sad due to not being able to read faster, which in turn made their day "a little worse". Another one of their reading sessions left them feeling proud of themselves because they did not expect to fully comprehend the novel, which belongs to the epic fantasy genre. Lastly, before their last reading session, they experienced being hopeful but tired. However, they predicted they would "definitely be in a better mood" because the novel they had chosen was by an author whose writing style they were familiar with. As they state: "It always lifts my mood when I read a book I love. It's the best feeling." Their predictions proved correct since they expressed feelings of excitement, intrigue, joy, and hopefulness upon finishing this reading session.

The feeling of exhaustion due to work was something that P5 expressed prior to their first reading session, but they hoped to feel less stressed and to be able to read more in general because of the novel they chose. While they were reading the novel, they expressed feelings of nostalgia and sadness, but in the end, they felt happy because they had picked up a book to read after a while. Before another one of their reading sessions, they felt relaxed due to finishing

some university assignments, and that mood was, as predicted, the same during and after the reading session since the novel they were reading not only made them relaxed but also made them laugh. They wrote: "I satisfied the need to read something light and funny." This is where we can notice mood optimization and the reader choosing their reading material based on their hedonic needs (Reinecke, 2016). When asked why they chose that particular novel, they stated: "I want to read something light and fun." In their third reading session, they hoped to feel less stressed and more calm, and that was exactly what had happened: "…the book made me forget about my life stressors for a few minutes." Their mood predictions and mood in general remained consistent for the remainder of their reading sessions. They kept being in a positive mood, and the reading material they had chosen did not influence that in a negative way.

Even though P6 felt drained after a long week of work and social activities before their first reading session, they were hopeful that the fact that they were reading a novel belonging to the mystery genre would keep them engaged and a bit more invigorated. As a result of reading for thirty minutes over this reading session, they expressed being glad about the novel being better than they had expected, but it also evoked emotions of sadness and anger because it covered the topic of the dangers of being a woman, which made them relate to the character. They also felt physically tired, but mentally much more focused after the reading session was over. There was another one of P6's reading sessions before which they expressed feeling drained due to a busy and long day at work. Since they chose an old favorite to reread, they predicted that it would have "its usual comforting effect" on them. And admittedly, their predictions were correct; they described feeling "warm, comforted, and happy" while reading the novel because of the familiarity of the characters and the writing, which always makes them feel like they have come home. Moreover, they even state: "I feel like I've had a warm hug to end my day with." Here we can see that rereading can indeed be a useful choice when one wants to feel better due to the familiarity of a beloved novel (Horner, 2013). For the remaining reading sessions, this participant started them feeling content and finished them in the same mood, just as predicted.

P7 started their first reading session feeling tired due to many responsibilities during the day but used mood optimization in order to help them relax, which is evident from them explaining why they had chosen the novel for that reading session: "Because I need something light to make me relax." They also predicted feeling happy due to being close to overall enjoying the novel as well as being close to completing it. These predictions came to fruition because the participant felt happy about finishing the book, further explaining why: "…it had a

very cute ending and everything wrapped up nicely." Due to sickness before their next reading session, they felt sad and predicted still feeling sad upon completing the novel because they had assumed the ending would be sad, "but sad in a good way". P7 did indeed feel sad while reading because their favourite characters "were hurting". However, upon finishing, they expressed feeling both happy as a result of completing a novel they had been reading for a month and sad because of the events that had taken place in the novel. They began the rest of their reading sessions in a positive mood. During one of them, they predicted they would feel content due to finishing a novel they had been reading for a long time, and that was exactly what happened, in addition to the story itself having a happy ending, which played a role in them feeling joyful. Even though after the next reading session they ended up feeling confused due to starting a new novel and being introduced to many new characters, when they reported about that novel in their final post-reading form, they expressed feeling calm and happy due to enjoying what they had read.

P8 expressed feeling tired before their first reading session, but mood optimization can also be noticed when they explain the reason for choosing their novel: "I needed something comfy and heart-warming." Moreover, when asked to predict their mood upon finishing reading, they claimed that they were not able to predict their mood because they are not always able to influence unpredictable situations at home, which would certainly impact their mood. However, no unpredictable situations occurred, and this participant felt "relaxed and good" while reading and more prepared to start their day after finishing the reading session. Even though they felt sick before their next reading session, they also felt relaxed due to spending their weekend resting. They even predicted that they would feel good and relaxed after completing their reading session because they were home alone and were also "loving this book". This prediction was correct—this reading session not only made them feel relaxed but also excited to spend time doing other things they had planned for that evening. They entered their following reading session in a neutral mood: "I'm feeling alright, not very good, not very bad!" due to some family-related occurrences. They expressed hope for this reading session to give them "a spark of joy" and they predicted it would offer them "just a few moments away from reality". Afterwards, they felt calm, which is a feeling they do not experience very easily. They go on to say: "So I'm happy reading can give me this feeling." What is more, this reading session made them ready to start studying. Their mood was similar to their previous reading session, but this time they were reading another book, so they could not predict how they would feel after. Upon finishing this reading session, they felt "a bit more relaxed than before", but

they also expressed excitement about continuing reading the novel as soon as possible. Finally, they unfortunately felt bad before their last reading session due to some issues with friends, which took a toll mentally on them. Therefore, they once again used mood optimization when choosing the novel to read, as well as choosing a familiar book: "I read this book last year and it made me feel wholesome, and I need that today." However, they still could not feel confident enough to predict that the novel would have the same impact on them: "I don't know if the impact will be big enough to fix me now." Even if they felt "a bit better and cosy" while reading, they could not fully feel better afterwards: "Still not good, the reading made sure it's not worse, but it's also not better."

The first reading session P9 recorded began with them feeling relaxed due to being in a calming environment of nature. They also predicted they would feel excited upon finishing their current read because it connects two of the book series. Not only did P9 continue feeling relaxed while reading, but they also felt "…super happy because the book is so funny, fluffy, and cute and has a super fun murder mystery plot, which I love!" As predicted, after completing their reading session, a feeling of excitement was present. The next reading session was entered by a tired P9 due to a lack of sleep. They also expressed feeling anxious and predicted feeling more relaxed upon finishing their reading session, which proved to me more than correct since they reported being in "a much better mood" and they even described the novel as "a mood booster". They continued claiming the novel is elevating their mood even throughout the following reading sessions, when they felt stressed due to a busy workday. Finally, they started their final reading session in a "really good mood" with a mug of their favourite beverage, and just as they predicted, their mood stayed the same, with the addition of excitement to continue with the story.

There was a participant (P10) that started each of their reading sessions in a great mood, but for various reasons such as: being grateful for their life and the day off they had, overall excitement to read due to a productive and entertaining family day, as well as because of a pleasant family dinner they had had prior to the reading session. There was one reading session prior to which they expressed feeling "good but tired" due to eating a lot of food for dinner. For each of their reading sessions, they predicted that they would feel happy or very good. After one of the reading sessions, in which they read a poetry book based on the Quran and Hadith, they ended up feeling grateful for their life and the peace their religion gives them. Considering we know the first known texts to be used for the purpose of bibliotherapy were religious ones,

it does not surprise P10 had such a positive experience during that reading session (Stip et al., 2020).

P11 reported feeling in a great mood before three of their reading sessions. Each time, they correctly predicted that their mood would stay the same afterwards. Moreover, even when they reported feeling tired, it was not accompanied by another negative feeling. For those sessions, they predicted that they would still feel tired but more relaxed, and they would end up being correct.

To sum it all up, these eleven participants' results show a variety of different ways reading in English as a foreign language may affect the reader. This comes as no surprise since emotions experienced when one reads are not solely a product of the reading as an activity but also of the emotions and events they were experiencing beforehand (Mar et al., 2011). Moreover, most of them had successfully predicted how they would feel after completing their reading sessions, which goes hand in hand with mood optimization, as they often chose those novels that they had predicted would elevate their mood (Reinecke, 2016). Teachers of English as a second language should take these results into consideration and always try to encourage their students to read in English, regardless of their English proficiency level. Developing a culture of reading is something that mostly positively affects the reader's mood. As could have been noticed, these participants opted for those novels that would, hopefully, enable them to lift their mood or stay in the same positive mood they had been in before reading. Therefore, teachers of English as a second language may consider allowing students to research and choose those books that seem to fit their current mood. This may have a positive effect on the overall eagerness of students to read in a foreign language.

9.4. Is there a difference between reading in a foreign language and a mother tongue?

The participants in this research are all non-native speakers of the English language. Some studies have shown that people, when hearing words in their mother tongue, feel them more emotionally than in a foreign language (Ivaz et al., 2016). However, it has also been shown that individuals are able to experience narrative transportation when consuming stories in a foreign language to the same level as in their mother tongue Chung Fat-Yim et al. (2019). Therefore, by asking the participants in the post-reading form if they would like to read the translation of the novel they were reading, we tried to gain insight into whether there is a difference between reading in a foreign language and in their mother tongue.

P1 explains that even though reading a translated version of the first novel they were reading (*The House in the Cerulean Sea* by T. J. Klune) might be helpful to understand some unfamiliar words, they still would not opt for reading it because they believe that "translations usually take the magic out of the original text." Inversely, for the second of the two novels they reported on during their reading sessions (*Written in the Stars* by Alexandria Bellefleur) they claim that they would like to read the Portuguese translation because they found some of the vocabulary items difficult to understand and they had to search for the meaning, which made for a slow read for them. They believe it would have been a faster read had they read the translation.

P2 has various thoughts on reading translations of four different novels they reported on during their reading sessions. When it comes to one novel (*Chain of Thorns* by Cassandra Clare), they claim that they would likely read the German translation of the novel because they would be able to read faster as it would be easier for them to read this particular novel in their mother tongue. They also claim it would be easier for them to read another novel (*We Hunt the Flame* by Hafsah Faizal). Both of these novels belong to the fantasy genre. On the other hand, they would not like to read the German translation of the other two novels because they could understand everything easily (*Teach Me* by Olivia Dade) and because they do not enjoy reading novels belonging to the romance genre in their mother tongue (*The Wedding Crasher* by Mia Sosa).

P3 reports on three different novels throughout their five reading sessions, and continuously expresses that they do not enjoy reading German translations. For one of the novels (*A Dawn of Onyx* by Kate Golden) they explain that the novel itself feels "a bit cringy and immature" so the translation to their mother tongue would most likely feel even more so. Moreover, for another novel (*The Serpent and the Wings of Night* by Carissa Broadbent), they state that they probably would not read the translation considering the fact that they do not usually read in German, but continue on to explain that they would not necessarily mind this particular novel's translation. This is because, according to them, "this wouldn't feel as cringey as other books in their translated versions." They echo the same thoughts about the possibility of reading the translation of their third novel (*The Ashes and the Star-Cursed King* by Carissa Broadbent).

When it comes to P4's thoughts on reading translations of their four novels of choice, for the first one (*In the Dream House* by Carmen Maria Machado) they shared that they think that English is a very powerful language, which makes the novel seem "more real" and the

message clearer, continuing to explain that nowadays "it feels weird not to read books in English." Even though they prefer reading in English, for their second novel of choice (*Song of Silver, Flame Like Night* by Amélie Wen Zhao) they share that some of the novel's world-building "went over their head." Moreover, even though they believe that they would miss a lot of important information if they read a Swedish translation of their third novel of choice (*The Final Empire* by Brandon Sanderson), they did express the feeling that it was possible that the Swedish translation would be easier to read. However, they also share that they do not want to give up and try reading the novel that is challenging for them in English. Finally, for their fourth novel of choice (*The Song of Achilles* by Madeline Miller) they would read a Swedish translation because they had already read another book by the author in Swedish and they enjoyed their experience. Furthermore, they clarify that they decided to read this novel in its original format to be able to see the author's writing style, but they conclude that for them, the translation and the original are equal.

P5's reading sessions were about two novels, for both of which they answered positively when asked whether they would read their translations. When it comes to the first novel they report on (*To Selena, With Love* by Chris Pérez), they shared the desire to read the translation of the novel to their mother tongue (Spanish) because the novel is based on a Mexican American artist, and they believe reading it in Spanish would make them enjoy the novel even more. Furthermore, they explained when they were reading their second novel of choice (*Anna K: A Love Story* by Jenny Lee) that they would read the translation to Spanish because they believed "it would be funnier".

Between the three novels that P6 read, they stated that they would not prefer to read the translations of the two of them. For the first (*The Sun Down Motel* by Simone St. James), they did express the possibility of maybe wanting to read the translation into Flemish but definitely not Dutch since they prefer to read the way they would talk when reading in their mother tongue. However, in English, they do not have that preference, so they prefer to read the original. Moreover, over the course of their three reading sessions, they definitely would not enjoy reading the translation of it (*Murder of Crows* by Anne Bishop) because it was a reread of it for them, and they think that with the translation the novel would lose its "familiar effect" and "comforting feeling" it has in English for them.

P7 stays consistent in their thoughts about reading translations of the four novels they read over the course of their reading sessions (*Icebreaker* by Hannah Grace; *Empire of Storms* by Sarah J. Maas; *Tower of Dawn* by Sarah J. Maas, and *The Atlas Six* by Olivie Blake). They

explain that they do not usually enjoy reading translated novels because it "ruins the story" for them since they mostly read in English. They also state that they do not think one of the books would be translated well into their mother tongue (Slovak) and therefore would lose "its magic". However, they do reflect on the fact that they might have enjoyed reading a translation more when they were younger, as some of the novels tend to have more complex, unknown words.

For the first three of their reading sessions, P8 read a novel (*The School for Good and Evil* by Soman Chainani) whose translation they would not want to read because, as they state: "I'm finding it hard to read non-English books, because I'm so used to reading in English now." Moreover, they share that it would feel "weird" for them to start reading in their mother tongue again (Dutch) because they only do that with some book series they started a while ago. Not only that, but, similarly to P7, they go on to explain that they think "the magic of the book" would be gone when translation occurs. They express the same thoughts on the other two novels they read over their other two reading sessions (*The Adventures of Amina Al-Sirafi* by Shannon Chakraborty and *A Wizard's Guide to Defensive Baking* by T. Kingfisher).

Over the course of their reading sessions, P9 read two different novels and for both of them claimed that they would not read their translations into Serbian. Firstly, for their first novel of choice (*Legendary* by Stephanie Garber) they stated: "Absolutely not. I own the first book in the series translated and I started it, did not like it, switched to my Kindle to the original (English) version and it was instantly much better. Fantasy just sounds cringey when translated." They give a similar answer about another novel (*Twisted Love* by Anna Huang) where they state that they would not willingly get a translation of it because romance (and this novel belongs to the romance genre) sounds 'cringey' when translated to their mother tongue (Serbian).

After the first reading session they completed, when asked whether they would read the translation of the book they had been reading (*Tragic Bonds* by J. Bree), and to explain why, P10 wrote: "No. I've hated reading translations from the moment I found out they existed. I'd reconsider reading a translation when it comes to non-fiction books or books I'd like to pass on to my kids. But definitely not 'simple' fantasy books like this one." They also state that they would not read a translation of another two novels, one (*The Dragon Scourge* by Russell Nohelty) because they are not interested in reading translated fantasy novels, and another one (*A Year of Marvellous Ways* by Sarah Winman) because the novel "has very lyrical writing" and they do not think that type of writing style would translate well into Dutch. On the other hand, they share that they would read a translation of a poetry collection (*From Darkness Into*

Light by A. Helwa) in order to read it to their children or give it as a gift to those not fluent in English. When replying to this question about another novel (*Daisy Jones and the Six* by Taylor Jenkins Reid), they were unsure about whether they would read the translation into Dutch: "I'm not sure. I'm not against it because of the genre (historical fiction) but I don't think the lyrics will be as impactful in another language. And I don't think I'll ever be in a situation where it would make sense to read a translated version."

P11 claims that they would not read a translation of the novel they were reading during their first reading session because the novel is about a sailor (*The Adventures of Amina Al-Sirafi* by Shannon Chakraborty), and not a lot of vocabulary connected to sailing is familiar to them in their mother tongue (Polish). They also claim they would not read translations of two other novels since they prefer to read fantasy and contemporary novels in English. However, for another two reading sessions, they claim that they would read the translation into Polish because for one, (*High Fidelity* by Nick Hornby) they thought it would be the same experience as reading in English. Furthermore, for another novel (*The London Séance Society* by Sarah Penner), they express that they would prefer the translation since they had to look up a lot of the words typical for the 1800s.

To conclude, these eleven participants demonstrated different thoughts on feeling the need to read a translation of their given novel of choice. There are a few reasons for which the participants claimed that they did not want to read the translation. To start with, it depends on the genre of the novel they are reading. A few participants explained that they do not enjoy reading fantasy and romance novels in their mother tongue. Moreover, some participants expressed negative emotions towards reading translated versions of their novels of choice, such as embarrassment and unease. Furthermore, there have been multiple claims that "the magic" of the novel would be lost and therefore not as enjoyable as the novel in its original form. Some have also reflected on the fact that certain writing styles would not be translated well, resulting in a worse reading experience. On the other hand, one participant expressed the desire to read the translated version because it would make for a faster reading experience, considering some unknown words. Taking all of these things into consideration, the majority of participants would refuse to read translated versions of their novels of choice. This could be a demonstration of the fact that if one becomes fluent enough in English, they start feeling transported at a higher level than they would in their mother tongue. This can be a positive example for the teachers of English as a second language to encourage their students to use English as much as possible in order to become so fluent in it that they can read novels in English and feel as transported as

they would in their mother tongue. These results coincide with findings by Chung Fat-Yim et al. (2019) that demonstrate readers being able to experience the same level of narrative transportation in foreign language as in their native tongue. However, it is important to note that each reader has an individual experience while consuming their text of choice.

10 Conclusion

To sum it all up, reading in English as a foreign language can have many positive effects. First of all, it influences and changes one's mood mostly for the better. It also helps readers gain new perspectives on certain issues they may be facing by covering topics similar to those they are experiencing. Moreover, it offers a type of escapism through which the readers are able to potentially forget their real-life problems and feel transported to the new world, that of the story.

Since the majority of the participants demonstrated the ability to predict how they would feel after reading, it would be beneficial to take that into consideration when it comes to choosing reading material for learners of English as a second language at schools. Furthermore, the participants often expressed that reading in English may offer them the same level of being transported, as in their mother tongue, if not more. This could be a beneficial insight for the teachers of English as a second language to encourage their students to develop reading habits in English in order to not only become more fluent, but also to elevate their mood, help them deal with their personal problems or escape their reality for a little while.

11 Suggestions for further research

Considering this research was done on a small sample of participants, all coming from different countries and having in common the fact that English is not their native tongue, it would be beneficial to further research how reading in English as a foreign language influences one's emotions. It would be especially curious to see how it influences learners of English as a second language that are on different levels of their English.

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IZJAVA O IZVORNOSTI DIPLOMSKOG RADA

Izjavljujem da je moj diplomski rad izvorni rezultat mojeg rada te da se u izradi istoga nisam koristila drugim izvorima osim onih koji su u njemu navedeni.

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(vlastoručni potpis studenta)