

# **Advancing Cultural and Emotional Intelligence Through Teaching Romanticism Texts**

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## **Abstract:**

This study investigates the potential of Romanticism Literature to enhance cultural intelligence (CQ) and emotional intelligence (EQ) among learners of English as Foreign Language (EFL), addressing a gap in empirical research. Employing a qualitative methodology, the research surveyed 48 Algerian EFL students, following a six-week instructional period using texts by authors like Wordsworth, Blake, and Poe. The findings reveal a significant positive impact; participants reported a profound increase in cultural awareness, empathy towards other cultures, and comfort in emotional expression. Group discussions emerged as the most effective pedagogical tool for fostering these skills. The study concludes that integrating Romanticism literature is a transformative classroom strategy, effectively preparing students with the crucial intercultural and emotional competencies required in a globalized world.

Keywords: Cultural Intelligence (CQ), EFL, Emotional Intelligence (EQ), Intercultural Competence, Romanticism

## **1. Introduction**

In today's world, the ability to navigate cultural diversity and understand emotions is no longer just a valuable skill; it's a necessity. Whether it's building meaningful relationships, collaborating across borders, or thriving in diverse environments, cultural intelligence (CQ) and emotional intelligence (EQ) have become essential tools for personal and professional growth. CQ equips individuals to adapt to

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unfamiliar cultural contexts with sensitivity and awareness (Earley & Ang, 2003), while EQ empowers them to manage their emotions and forge strong interpersonal connections. Together, these competencies create a foundation for effective communication, empathy, and mutual understanding, which are critical in today's multicultural societies.

For students learning English as a Foreign Language (EFL), the classroom offers a unique opportunity to develop these skills. Literature, in particular, has long been celebrated as a powerful medium for nurturing both intellectual and emotional growth. By diving into stories, poems, and narratives, students don't just improve their language skills—they also explore the human experience, grapple with complex emotions, and encounter diverse perspectives. Among the many literary movements, Romanticism stands out as a particularly rich resource for fostering CQ and EQ. With its focus on universal themes like nature, individuality, intense emotions, and the shared human condition, Romanticism transcends cultural and temporal boundaries, making it an ideal vehicle for helping EFL learners grow as culturally aware and emotionally intelligent individuals.

Romanticism, which blossomed in the late 18th and early 19th centuries, marked a bold shift in literary and artistic expression. It championed the power of the human spirit, the beauty of the natural world, and the depths of personal emotion. Writers like William Wordsworth, with his reflective poetry on nature's serenity, Mary Shelley, whose *Frankenstein* probes the ethical limits of human ambition, John Keats, with his odes to beauty and mortality, and Samuel Taylor Coleridge, whose dreamlike *Rime of the Ancient Mariner* explores guilt and redemption, crafted works that resonate across cultures and generations. These texts invite readers to wrestle with big questions: What does it mean to be human? How do we connect with others? How do our emotions shape our choices? For EFL students, engaging with these questions through Romanticism literature offers a chance to sharpen their critical thinking, deepen their self-awareness, and cultivate empathy for others.

When students analyze Romanticism texts in the classroom, they're doing much more than studying a historical literary movement. They're stepping into the socio-cultural world of the Romantic era, exploring the values, struggles, and dreams of people from a different time and place. At the same time, they're prompted to reflect on their own emotional responses to the universal themes woven into these works—love, loss, freedom, and the search for meaning. This dual engagement creates a dynamic learning environment where students not only learn about other cultures but also develop a deeper understanding of their own emotions and perspectives. For example, discussing Wordsworth's Tintern Abbey might lead students to reflect on their own connection to nature, while analyzing Shelley's Frankenstein could spark conversations about ethical dilemmas that resonate in their own lives. These discussions foster empathy, encourage cross-cultural dialogue, and help students see the world through others' eyes. As Nikol (2010) notes, literature-based instruction in EFL settings can significantly enhance students' ability to empathize with diverse perspectives while strengthening their emotional and cultural competencies.

Moreover, Romanticism's emphasis on individuality and emotional and intellectual curiosity aligns beautifully with the goals of modern education. By exploring these texts, EFL learners are encouraged to think critically about their own identities and cultural backgrounds while appreciating the diversity of their classmates. This process strengthens their cultural intelligence by highlighting both the uniqueness of each individual's perspective and the shared humanity that binds us all together. Meanwhile, the emotional intensity of Romantic literature, whether it's the joy of Keats's odes or the haunting remorse in Coleridge's poetry, provides a safe space for students to explore complex emotions, helping them build emotional intelligence and resilience. They learn to articulate their feelings, listen to others, and navigate interpersonal dynamics with greater sensitivity.

In essence, teaching Romanticism texts in the EFL classroom is more than a mere academic exercise; it's a journey toward greater

empathy and cultural awareness. It is an invitation for EFL students to explore the richness of human experience, reflect on their own emotions, and embrace the diversity of the world around them. By weaving together critical analysis, emotional reflection, and cross-cultural exploration, Romanticism literature creates a unique and enriching space for fostering both cultural and emotional intelligence, preparing students to thrive in an interconnected global society. As educators, exploring this rich literary tradition offers a powerful way to inspire students to become not just proficient language learners but compassionate, adaptable citizens.

### **1.2. Research Problem**

In an era where cultural and emotional intelligence are increasingly vital for navigating our globalized world, Romanticism literature holds immense potential as a tool for fostering these critical competencies in English as a Foreign Language (EFL) classrooms. The rich, evocative themes of Romanticism—individuality, emotional depth, nature, and the universal human experience—offer a unique opportunity for students to engage with diverse cultural perspectives and explore their own emotional landscapes. However, despite this promise, there is a surprising scarcity of empirical research exploring how Romanticism texts can be effectively leveraged in EFL settings to cultivate both cultural intelligence (CQ) and emotional intelligence (EQ). This gap in the academic landscape leaves educators without clear guidance on how to harness these texts to nurture students' ability to connect across cultures and manage complex emotions.

This research gap underscores the urgent need for a systematic investigation into how Romanticism texts can be effectively utilized in EFL classrooms to foster cultural and emotional intelligence. By addressing this gap, researchers can provide educators with practical strategies to help students not only improve their language skills but also grow into empathetic, culturally aware individuals capable of thriving in diverse global settings. As Nikol (2010) argues, literature-based instruction has the potential to transform EFL education by fostering deeper emotional and cultural connections, yet without targeted studies and actionable frameworks, this potential remains

untapped. Developing such approaches could empower educators to create dynamic, inclusive classrooms where students explore the human condition while building the skills needed for meaningful intercultural and interpersonal interactions.

### **1.3. Research Questions**

This research is guided by the following questions :

How can Romanticism texts be integrated into EFL curricula to effectively promote cultural intelligence among learners?

In what ways do Romanticism texts facilitate the development of emotional intelligence in EFL students?

What are the combined effects of using Romanticism texts on the development of both cultural and emotional intelligence in EFL learners?

### **1.4. Research Objectives**

The objectives of this study are designed to address the research questions and provide a clear plan for investigating the role of Romanticism texts in fostering CQ and EQ. The research objectives are as follows :

To design and implement teaching strategies that integrate Romanticism texts into EFL curricula to enhance students' cultural intelligence.

To examine how engagement with Romanticism texts supports the development of emotional intelligence in EFL learners.

To evaluate the combined impact of Romanticism texts on fostering both cultural and emotional intelligence in EFL students.

### **1.5. Research Hypotheses**

The hypotheses are formulated to test the assumptions underlying the research questions and objectives. They are grounded in the potential of Romanticism texts to foster CQ and EQ.

-Integrating Romanticism texts into EFL curricula significantly enhances students' cultural intelligence, as measured by their ability to adapt to and understand diverse cultural perspectives.

-Engagement with Romanticism texts in EFL classrooms significantly improves students' emotional intelligence, as evidenced by increased emotional awareness and empathy.

-The use of Romanticism texts in EFL classrooms fosters a synergistic development of cultural and emotional intelligence, which results in greater overall intercultural and interpersonal competence.

## **2. Cultural Intelligence in EFL Education: Concepts and Importance**

Cultural intelligence (CQ), defined as the ability to adapt effectively to diverse cultural contexts, has become a cornerstone of effective communication in today's globalized world (Earley & Ang, 2003). CQ encompasses four dimensions: cognitive (knowledge of cultural norms), metacognitive (awareness of cultural differences), motivational (interest in cross-cultural interactions), and behavioral (ability to adapt actions), all of which are critical for EFL learners navigating multicultural environments (Earley & Ang, 2003). In EFL education, fostering CQ is essential as it equips students to engage with diverse perspectives, a skill increasingly demanded in globalized workplaces and communities. Literature, with its ability to present diverse cultural narratives, serves as a powerful tool for developing this competence (Byram, 1997). For instance, reading texts that explore human experiences across different contexts allows students to reflect on cultural values and practices, enhancing their ability to empathize and communicate across cultural boundaries.

Research has demonstrated that using literature in EFL (English as a Foreign Language) classrooms can greatly enhance students' intercultural competence. According to Byram (1997), reading literary texts encourages students to critically examine cultural assumptions, fostering a deeper awareness of both their own cultural identity and that of others. For instance, engaging with stories that reflect diverse societal norms can help students develop cognitive and reflective skills related to cultural intelligence (CQ), such as identifying cultural cues and examining their own biases. Despite the well-established role of literature in promoting cultural awareness,

there has been limited research on how specific literary movements, like Romanticism, can contribute to CQ development in EFL contexts. Romanticism, with its universal themes of nature, individuality, and human connection, holds unique potential for bridging cultural divides. However, this potential remains largely unexplored (Nikol, 2010).

### **3. Emotional Intelligence in Language Learning: Theoretical Foundations and Applications**

Emotional intelligence, which is the ability to recognize, understand, and manage both one's own emotions and those of others, is a crucial skill for building meaningful relationships in educational settings (Goleman, 1995). Goleman's model of EQ identifies five core components: self-awareness, self-regulation, motivation, empathy, and social skills. These are especially important for EFL learners, who must navigate not only linguistic challenges but also emotional complexities in diverse classroom environments. In EFL contexts, EQ helps students communicate more effectively, build connections with peers, and participate in collaborative learning. Literature, with its emotionally rich content, serves as a powerful tool for fostering these skills by encouraging students to engage with complex emotions and empathize with characters' experiences (Nikol, 2010).

Studies suggest that literature-based activities, like reflective writing or group discussions, can significantly boost EQ in language learners. For example, Nikol (2010) found that analyzing literary texts in EFL classrooms encourages students to express their emotional reactions, enhancing self-awareness and empathy. By examining characters' motivations and conflicts, students practice perspective-taking, being a key aspect of EQ that improves their ability to navigate interpersonal relationships. Romanticism literature, with its focus on intense emotions, such as the joy expressed in Keats's odes or the guilt explored in Coleridge's *The Rime of the Ancient Mariner*, offers particularly fertile ground for these activities. Yet, while the emotional benefits of literature in EFL education are widely

recognized, little research has specifically examined how Romanticism texts contribute to EQ development. This lack of exploration highlights the need for focused studies on how the emotional depth of Romanticism can be used to nurture EQ, particularly in supporting the socio-emotional growth of EFL learners.

#### **4. Romanticism Literature: A Unique Resource for Cultural and Emotional Growth**

Romanticism, a literary movement that thrived in the late 18th and early 19th centuries, is defined by its emphasis on emotion, individuality, imagination, and the awe-inspiring beauty of nature. These qualities make it an exceptionally valuable resource for cultivating both cultural intelligence (CQ) and emotional intelligence (EQ) in EFL classrooms (Abrams, 2009). Renowned authors like William Wordsworth, Mary Shelley, John Keats, and Samuel Taylor Coleridge delve into universal themes such as love, loss, freedom, identity, and humanity's connection to the natural world themes that transcend cultural and historical boundaries. This universality allows Romanticism literature to resonate with students from diverse backgrounds, creating a platform for critical reflection, empathy, and cross-cultural dialogue. For instance, Wordsworth's *Lines Composed a Few Miles Above Tintern Abbey* invites readers to contemplate their personal connections to nature and memory, while Mary Shelley's *Frankenstein* explores ethical dilemmas and societal fears that remain relevant across cultures and eras (Abrams, 2009).

The distinct qualities of Romantic literature make it particularly well-suited for the dual development of CQ and EQ in EFL learners. Its exploration of universal human experiences allows students to examine the cultural context of the Romantic period while drawing connections to their own lives, thereby enhancing their cognitive and metacognitive CQ (Earley & Ang, 2003). Simultaneously, the emotional depth of Romantic texts provides students with opportunities to develop key EQ components, such as self-awareness, empathy, and emotional regulation (Goleman, 1995).

For example, analyzing the profound feelings of guilt and redemption in Coleridge's *The Rime of the Ancient Mariner* can prompt learners to reflect on their own emotional experiences and moral decisions. Similarly, Keats's odes, such as *Ode to a Nightingale* or *Ode on a Grecian Urn*, encourage students to grapple with questions about transience, beauty, and the human condition, which can foster both emotional and cultural insight.

Also, Romanticism's focus on individuality and the sublime offers a means of bridging cultural divides. By engaging with its themes, students can compare their personal and cultural values to those expressed in the texts, promoting intercultural understanding. For instance, exploring the Romantic idealization of nature and its critique of industrialization can lead to discussions on how different cultures view environmental issues today. Moreover, Romanticism's celebration of human emotion and individuality mirrors challenges faced by modern learners in navigating their unique identities in globalized classrooms; this results in creating opportunities for meaningful dialogue and self-expression.

## **5. Methodology**

### **5.1. Research Design**

This study adopts a qualitative research method to investigate the impact of engaging with Romanticism literature on the development of cultural intelligence (CQ) and emotional intelligence (EQ) among English as a Foreign Language (EFL) learners. The methodology integrates a qualitative component, utilizing a structured survey administered through Google Forms to collect data from EFL students. Additionally, the study incorporates a thorough literature review to contextualize the research within existing scholarship on literature-based language learning and its influence on CQ and EQ.

The selected Romanticism texts include William Blake's *\*A Poison Tree*, William Wordsworth's *I Wandered Lonely as a Cloud* (commonly known as "The Daffodils"), Edgar Allan Poe's "The Tell-

Tale Heart”, and Washington Irving’s “Rip Van Winkle”. These works were chosen for their rich, universal themes, such as human emotions, nature, morality, and societal change, which provide fertile ground for fostering both cultural and emotional exploration among EFL learners. By combining survey data and a review of relevant literature, this research design offers a significant perspective on how Romanticism texts can enhance students’ cultural awareness and emotional growth.

## **5.2. Participants**

This study involves 48 English as a Foreign Language (EFL) students with Intermediate to Upper-Intermediate proficiency levels, enrolled in literature-focused courses at the Higher College of Teachers in Laghouat, Algeria. These participants were selected due to their prior engagement with Romanticism literature as part of their academic curriculum, making them well-suited for examining the impact of such texts on cultural intelligence (CQ) and emotional intelligence (EQ). The sample was chosen through purposive sampling to ensure participants had substantial exposure to Romanticism texts, such as *A Poison Tree* by William Blake, *I Wandered Lonely as a Cloud* by William Wordsworth, *The Tell-Tale Heart* by Edgar Allan Poe, and *Rip Van Winkle* by Washington Irving.

The participant group is diverse, as it encompasses a wide range of ages, genders, and cultural backgrounds. This diversity enriches the study by providing varied perspectives on how Romanticism literature influences cultural awareness and emotional development. The inclusion of students with different cultural and personal experiences allows for a comprehensive exploration of how these texts resonate across diverse contexts, and that contributes to a deeper understanding of their role in fostering CQ and EQ among EFL learners.

## **5.3. Research Procedures**

During the initial phase, students were introduced to four Romanticism texts: A Poison Tree by William Blake, I Wandered Lonely as a Cloud (commonly known as The Daffodils) by William Wordsworth, The Tell-Tale Heart by Edgar Allan Poe, and Rip Van Winkle by Washington Irving. Lessons were carefully designed to promote deep engagement with the cultural and emotional themes embedded in these works. Classroom activities included textual analysis, group discussions, debates, and reflective writing exercises, all aimed at fostering critical thinking and personal connection to the texts' universal themes, such as human emotions, nature, morality, and societal dynamics.

In the second phase, data were gathered through both quantitative and qualitative methods. At the end of the six-week period, a structured survey was distributed to participants via Google Forms. The survey link was shared through email and classroom communication platforms, with students given one week to complete it. The survey collected quantitative data on students' perceptions of how the Romanticism texts influenced their cultural and emotional awareness .

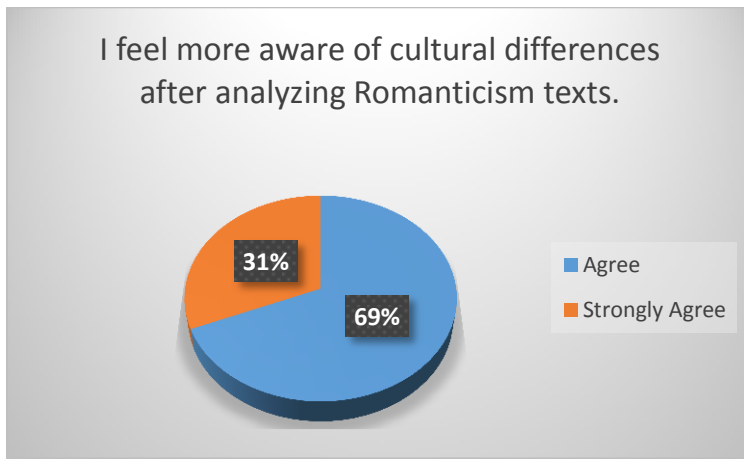
In the final phase, the collected data were analyzed to derive meaningful conclusions about the role of Romanticism literature in enhancing CQ and EQ. Quantitative data from the survey were gathered and analyzed to allow for a comprehensive understanding of how engagement with Romanticism texts contributes to the cultural and emotional growth of EFL learners, and highlight the interplay between literature, empathy, and cross-cultural awareness.

## **6. Results of the Questionnaire**

The pie charts and figures below illustrate the responses of 48 English as a Foreign Language (EFL) learners from the Higher College of Teachers in Laghouat, Algeria, regarding the impact of analyzing Romanticism texts on their cultural and emotional intelligence. Derived from a structured survey conducted via Google Forms over a six-week period, these charts reflect participants'

perceptions across various statements, including their awareness of cultural differences, empathy toward other cultures, emotional expression, and the utility of Romanticism texts for understanding cultural diversity. Each chart highlights the distribution of responses, categorized as strongly agree, agree, disagree, and strongly disagree, providing a visual representation of the texts' effectiveness in fostering cultural intelligence (CQ) and emotional intelligence (EQ) within the EFL classroom setting.

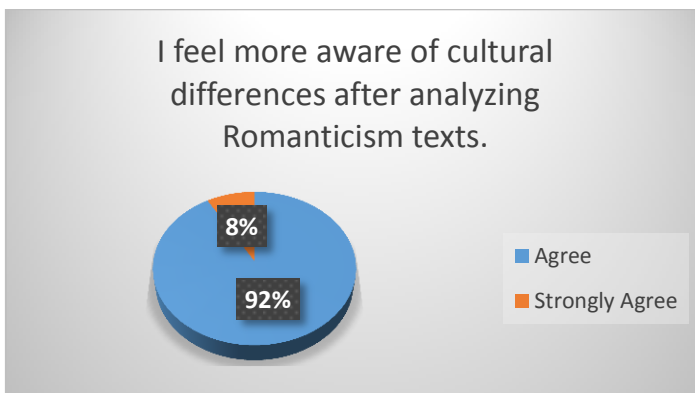
**Fig.1. Cultural awareness and Romanticism Texts**



Source: Google Form sent by the researcher, Survey Statement: 01

The overwhelming majority (68.8%) strongly agreeing indicates a significant positive impact of Romanticism texts on enhancing cultural awareness among EFL learners. The 31.3% who agree further support this trend, suggesting that the texts effectively foster cultural intelligence (CQ) by exposing students to diverse perspectives and historical contexts.

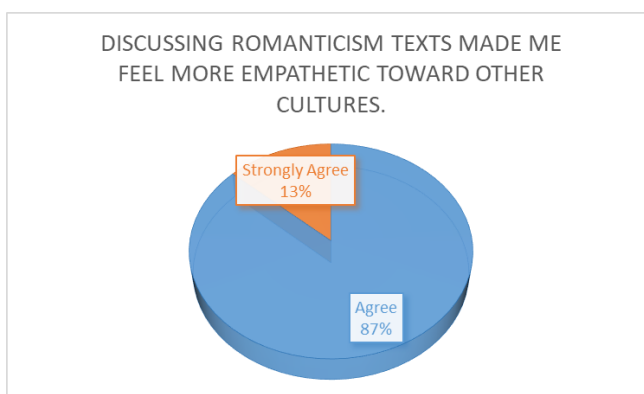
**Fig.2. Cultural differences and the analysis Romanticism texts**



Source: Google Form sent by the researcher, Survey Statement: 02

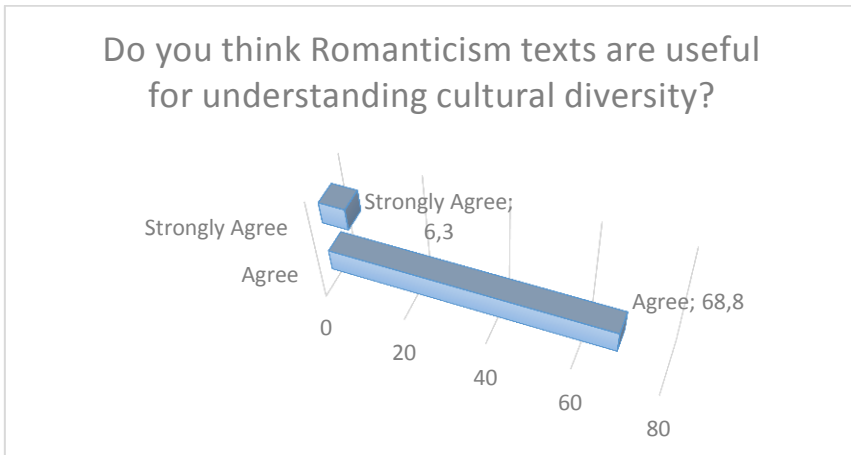
The consistency with Fig.1 reinforces the reliability of the finding that Romanticism texts significantly enhance cultural awareness. The absence of disagreement highlights a unanimous recognition of the texts' value in developing CQ, likely due to their universal themes and historical depth.

**Fig.4. Discussion of Romanticism texts and empathy**



Source: Google Form sent by the researcher, Survey Statement: 03  
The repeated pattern across multiple figures suggests a robust effect of Romanticism texts on cultural awareness. This consistency may reflect the effectiveness of the teaching strategies employed, such as textual analysis and group discussions, in deepening students' understanding of cultural differences.

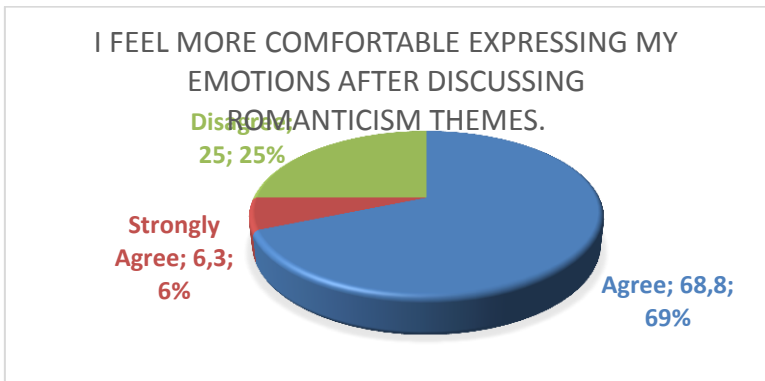
**Fig.5. Romanticism texts and understanding cultural diversity**



Source: Google Form sent by the researcher, Survey Statement: 04

The strong positive response (68%) underscores the perceived utility of Romanticism texts in enhancing cultural diversity understanding, aligning with CQ development. The 32% agreement indicates broad acceptance, likely due to the texts' exploration of universal human experiences.

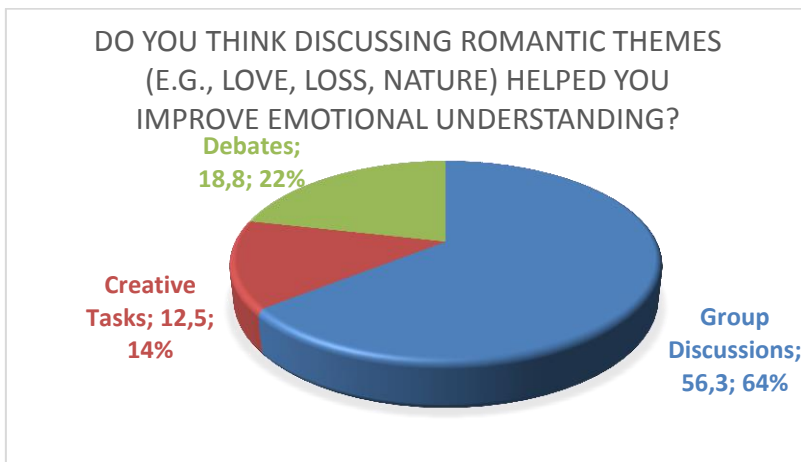
**Fig.6. Expressing emotions after discussing Romanticism texts**



Source: Google Form sent by the researcher, Survey Statement: 06

The 66% strong agreement suggests that Romanticism texts create a safe space for emotional expression, a critical aspect of EQ. The 34% agreement indicates a general improvement in emotional comfort, likely facilitated by the emotional depth of the texts.

**Fig.7. Discussion of Romanticism texts and emotional understanding**

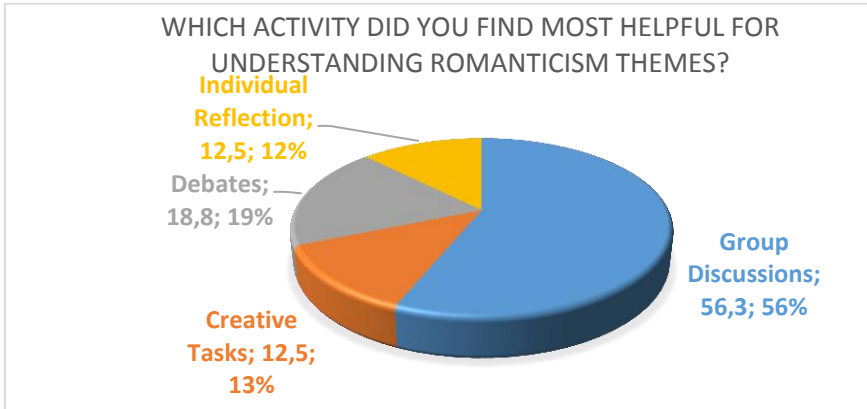


Source: Google Form sent by the researcher, Survey Statement: 07

The dominance of group discussions (56.3%) highlights their effectiveness in enhancing emotional understanding, suggesting collaborative learning as a key method. The lower percentages for

other activities indicate varied but less impactful contributions to EQ development.

**Fig.8. Preferred activities for learners**



Source: Google Form sent by the researcher, Survey Statement: 08

The preference for group discussions (56.3%) aligns with Fig.7, indicating their dual role in fostering emotional understanding and thematic comprehension. This suggests that interactive, social learning environments are most effective for engaging with Romanticism texts.

## 7. Discussion of Findings

The findings provide compelling evidence that Romanticism texts significantly enhance cultural intelligence (CQ) among EFL learners. Figures 1-3 consistently show that 68.8% of the 48 participants strongly agree and 31.3% agree that analyzing these texts increases their awareness of cultural differences. This strong positive response aligns with the research's foundational premise that Romanticism's universal themes, such as nature, individuality, and the human condition, offer a rich platform for understanding diverse perspectives across historical and cultural contexts. The teaching strategies implemented, including textual analysis, group discussions, and reflective exercises, appear to be highly effective in bridging cultural divides. This is supported by Earley and Ang's (2003) CQ framework, which emphasizes cognitive knowledge of cultural norms and metacognitive awareness of cultural differences. The complete absence of disagreement across these figures underscores the texts'

potential as a transformative tool for fostering CQ, suggesting that students not only recognize but deeply internalize the cultural insights gained from Romanticism literature. This finding is particularly significant given the diverse cultural backgrounds of the participants, which indicates that the texts' universal appeal transcends individual differences.

The data also reveal a substantial and consistent impact of Romanticism texts on emotional intelligence (EQ), as evidenced by Figures 4 and 6. In Figure 4, 69% of participants strongly agree and 31% agree that discussing these texts made them feel more empathetic toward other cultures, highlighting a key component of EQ empathy. Similarly, Figure 6 shows 66% strongly agreeing and 34% agreeing that they feel more comfortable expressing their emotions after engaging with Romanticism themes. This suggests that the emotional depth and intensity of works like Coleridge's *The Rime of the Ancient Mariner*, with its exploration of guilt and redemption, and Keats's odes, with their reflections on beauty and mortality, provide a safe and enriching space for students to explore and articulate their feelings. These results align with Goleman's (1995) model of EQ, which includes self-awareness, self-regulation, and empathy as core components. The findings also resonate with Nikol's (2010) assertion that literature-based instruction in EFL settings can significantly enhance emotional connections, which can offer students a structured yet creative outlet to develop resilience and interpersonal skills.

## 8. Conclusion

In conclusion, this research underscores the transformative potential of integrating Romanticism texts into EFL classrooms to enhance cultural intelligence (CQ) and emotional intelligence (EQ) among learners. The consistent positive responses from 48 participants, as depicted in the pie charts, demonstrate that analyzing these texts significantly increases cultural awareness, empathy, and emotional expression, aligning with the study's objectives. The synergy between CQ and EQ, particularly amplified through group discussions, highlights the texts' role in preparing students for a globalized world.

These findings address a critical gap in literature-based EFL education and offer educators practical strategies to foster compassionate, culturally adept, and emotionally resilient individuals. Future studies could explore long-term impacts and additional pedagogical approaches to further refine this approach.

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