

## **An Investigation of the Relationship between Faculty of Education English Majors' Creative Reading Skills and their Cultural Intelligence**

By

**Hanaa Muhammad Abdel-Aleem**

Assistant lecturer at the curriculum and Instruction Department  
Faculty of Education- Fayoum University

**Prof. Mohammed Farouk Abd Elsamir**

Professor of Curriculum & EFL Instruction  
Vice President of Education and Student  
Affairs- Fayoum University

**Dr. Abeer El-Sayed Abo Zaid**

Lecturer of Curriculum & EFL Instruction  
Faculty of Education - Fayoum  
University

### **Abstract**

The current study aimed at exploring the relationship between Faculty of Education English Majors' creative reading skills and their cultural intelligence in a specific context, which was a conflict resolution strategy training program incorporated into literature circles in teaching prose fiction for Enhancing English Majors' creative reading and cultural intelligence at Faculty of Education, Fayoum University. The study participants included (94) of third year English section students at Faculty of Education, Fayoum University. The quasi-experimental design was used in the study. The data were collected using two instruments prepared by the researcher: a creative reading skills test, and a cultural intelligence scale, which were administered to the study participants pre and post the treatment. The study findings showed that there was a strong positive correlation between the participants' creative reading skills and cultural intelligence. In the light of these results, the study presented some recommendations and suggestions for further study.

**Key words:** *creative reading skills, cultural intelligence, English majors*

## المستخلص

هدفت الدراسة الحالية إلى الكشف عن العلاقة بين مهارات القراءة الإبداعية لدى طلاب شعبة اللغة الإنجليزية بكلية التربية وذكائهم الثقافي، في سياق محدد: وهو برنامج تدريبي قائم على استراتيجيات حسم الصراع والذي تم دمجها في حلقات الأدب في تدريس النصوص الروائية لتعزيز القراءة الإبداعية والذكاء الثقافي لطلاب تخصص اللغة الإنجليزية بكلية التربية جامعة الفيوم. وتضمن المشاركون في الدراسة (94) من طلاب الفرقة الثالثة قسم اللغة الإنجليزية بكلية التربية جامعة الفيوم. وتم استخدام التصميم شبه التجريبي في الدراسة. وتم جمع البيانات باستخدام أداتين من إعداد الباحثة وهما: اختبار مهارات القراءة الإبداعية، ومقياس الذكاء الثقافي، وتم تطبيقهما على المشاركين في الدراسة قبل وبعد تقديم البرنامج التدريبي. وأظهرت نتائج الدراسة وجود علاقة إيجابية قوية بين مهارات القراءة الإبداعية لدى الطلاب عينة الدراسة وذكاءهم الثقافي. وفي ضوء هذه النتائج قدمت الدراسة بعض التوصيات والمقترحات لمزيد من البحث.

**الكلمات المفتاحية:** مهارات القراءة الإبداعية، الذكاء الثقافي، تخصص اللغة الإنجليزية

## Introduction

Reading is one of the receptive skills, which represents a major source of language intake. Thus, it is necessary for students to master reading comprehension skills at its all levels. This means that students should have a good understanding of all reading aspects such as the main ideas, details, vocabulary items, concepts, images, inferences, perceptions, facts, and opinions. Teaching reading then aims mainly at developing the students' abilities to be effective, efficient, and creative in reading.

The importance of reading for learning both the first and foreign language has been stressed by many studies so that students can gradually and progressively inherit active habit of reading. For this reason and some others, reading is sometimes and should be given a first priority. One of these reasons is the students' main purpose of studying English, which becomes being able to access written sources. The second reason is represented in the large dependency of students' success in academic life or in college on reading. Third, the students' existence in a country where they have more access to written language than having opportunities to converse with native speakers causes the skill of reading to become more

important than the other skills. Reading is also regarded as the most integral part in learning languages (Irawati & Samarinda, 2016).

However, despite the importance of reading in the context of learning a foreign language, the ability of comprehending English texts still represents a problem for the majority of English language learners. Even when reading comprehension is being focused on, most attention is given to the low levels of comprehension (i.e. literal and inferential) while the higher levels are neglected (i.e. critical and creative). Consequently, students are found to be weak in reading comprehension in general and critical and creative reading skills in particular such as showing similarities and differences in texts and differentiating between opinions and facts (Al Qatnani, 2017; Kasem et al., 2022).

In this context, focusing on higher levels of reading comprehension is one of the goals that teaching literature in English classes pursues. Literature provides enjoyable and rich input, which could well stimulate students to develop a lifelong habit of reading. In addition, it always has something to offer. A literary text reading encompasses four processes: understanding, interpreting, responding, and enjoying. When students read novels, short stories or any fictional work, they can gain an enjoyable source and an authentic context for learning the language due to the cultural aspects of stories. Students also go beyond the literary texts to their own minds in order to find and draw meanings for the existing ideas and to express their views and opinions upon what is being read creatively (Toubeida, 2016).

Introducing literature in foreign language learning classrooms is useful for not only developing creative reading skills, but also for raising students' cultural knowledge and awareness because literature is culture bound. That is, the literary texts carry with them a sum of cultural values that immediately become apparent for the reader. Therefore, to interpret a literary text, the existence of some shared cultural references between the reader and writer is required. Students thus need to pay more attention to the issue of cultural symbols that are implied deeply between the lines, to be able to form some kind of attitudes and notions toward them (Daskalovska & Dimova, 2012).

Students' notions about other cultures help them to generalize when they interact with new people and impact their behavior toward the members of those cultures. Accordingly, at this point, literature teaching should be based on creative reading and addressing culture to make students able to comprehend and interpret the foreign literary works since being able to read and comprehend every word in the text does not necessarily mean they understand it culturally (Schwebs, 2019). Therefore, helping students to be aware of the cultural aspects of any literary work is an essential part in teaching literature for assisting them with understanding the work and developing their cultural intelligence.

How a person interacts effectively with culturally different people is a part of the value system of a human, which is referred to as cultural intelligence (Furrer et al., 2015). The cultural diversity that individuals encounter in literary works encourages, and sometimes requires them to develop a cultural intelligence to be able to adequately adapt to the modern sociocultural environment demands. However, the cultural intelligence has not received much attention the intelligences literature though the idea can be found in the area of organizational psychology, to which the concept was initially applied (Ferguson et al., 2016; Soldatova & Geer, 2013).

Teaching literature in general and prose fiction in particular can consequently be a tool for enhancing students' creative reading skills, as well as developing and enhancing their cultural intelligence. Therefore, introducing literature in English language classrooms, in more recent years, has become a topic that is frequently discussed in teaching circles. Then, many English teachers in their classrooms have started using texts of famous literary works and many publishers have started to incorporate in their textbooks parts of original literature (Detty, 2017). Therefore, in a context of teaching prose fiction, the current study attempted to investigate EFL majors' creative reading skills and cultural intelligence and to find out if there is any relation between them.

In fact, in the light of the above discussion, investigating the skills of creative reading of EFL learners is essential in order to find out whether they can engage actively with the new language and culture and

comprehend the complexity of the real life (Toubeida, 2016). Moreover, investigation of the variables that may affect the students' ability to engage with the reading text, add and edit to its content in a creative way is necessary, especially the students' ability to grasp the cultural aspects impeded in both fiction and nonfiction works. Therefore, the current study aimed to investigate whether Faculty of Education English Majors' creative reading skills are related to their cultural intelligence

### **Statement of the Problem**

The previous introduction makes it obvious that in spite of the importance of creative reading skills, they are neglected and not given enough emphasis, especially in the Egyptian context. It has been confirmed that the teachers' interest still stands far from achieving the comprehensive concept of reading, which is based on recognition, understanding, criticizing, problem solving, and creativity. Teaching reading continues to rely heavily on the facts and information contained in the text without paying attention to the basic skills of reading. (Mohamed, 2013; Masoud, 2014; Abdurraheem, 2015; El Morsi, 2015; Salem, 2017; Hassan et al., 2018; Helwa, 2020). Consequently, there is a real need to investigate the EFL students' creative reading skills and find out how far they are related to their cultural intelligence. Such investigation will be an extension of what has been done in this regard in other cultural contexts. Therefore, this study attempted to address the gap by investigating the cultural intelligence level possessed by EFL English majors' students and the relationship between this type of intelligence and their creative reading skills. Based on this, the following study question was drawn:

- What is the relationship between the Faculty of Education English majors' creative reading skills and cultural intelligence?

### **Study Purpose**

- This study aimed at investigating the relationship between Faculty of Education English majors' creative reading skills and their cultural intelligence.

### **Study Significance**

The current study may help in:

- Introducing a reliable measure of creative reading that will help EFL learners investigate their level of creative reading skills.
- Introducing a reliable measure of cultural intelligence that will help EFL learners investigate their level of cultural knowledge, metacognition, motivation, and skills.
- Developing Faculty of Education English Majors' creative reading skills and enhancing their cultural intelligence
- Providing researchers in the field of EFL instruction with information about the creative reading skills EFL learners actually use.
- Guiding syllabus designers and instructors to rely on a new guideline for developing materials that can enhance EFL students' creative reading skills

### **Study Hypothesis**

- There is a positive statistically significant correlation between the study participant's scores in the post administration of the creative reading skills test and the cultural intelligence scale.

### **Study Delimitations**

- The study was delimited to 94 English majors of the third year at Faculty of Education, Fayoum University.
- Fluency, flexibility, originality, and elaboration as the creative reading sub skills and literal, inferential, and critical reading skills as prerequisite to creative reading.

### **Definition of terms**

#### **Creative reading**

- Creative reading is “an interactive process between the reader and the reading text which encourages the reader to generate relations and alternatives based on the prior experience and that helps to add and edit the content of the text in different ways” (Al Qatnani, 2017, p. 30).
- Creative reading is also defined as reading for implied and inferred meanings, appreciative reactions, and critical evaluation (Adams, 2012; Russell, 2012, p.12)

- For the purpose of this study, creative reading can be simply defined as the ability of students to think of the text, analyze information and facts and go beyond the directly stated information to draw inferences, make comparisons, solve problems and synthesize information as well as organizing and generating ideas, providing additions and suggesting alternatives.

### **Cultural intelligence (CQ)**

- CQ is the ability to effectively interact with people coming from other cultural settings. That is, cultural intelligence is not only the ability to understand the behavior of people from another culture, but also the ability to demonstrate those cultural patterns accepted in that culture (Soldatova & Geer, 2013).
- CQ is a specific form of intelligence focused on the ability to grasp, reason, and behave effectively in situations characterized by cultural diversity (Furrer et al., 2015).
- Cultural intelligence is conceptualized as the individual's possession of an intercultural capability composed of cultural knowledge, cultural skills, and cultural metacognition (Presbitero, 2020)
- For the current study purpose, cultural intelligence can be defined as a multifaceted competency that consists of cultural knowledge that enables individuals to understand how people from a different culture talk, work and interact with each other; cultural metacognition, which enables individuals to gain, comprehend and monitor their cultural knowledge or information; cultural motivation that reflects the individuals' desire to learn and behave effectively in culturally diverse settings; and cultural skills, which refer to individuals' flexibility in showing actions appropriate to different cultural contexts.

## **Review of literature**

### **1. Creative Reading**

Reading in itself is considered a creative process because everyone brings with them their own viewpoints and set of experiences and previous

knowledge and thus they do not read the same text in the same way. In other words, when a person read creatively, he/ she puts himself in the places and situations described in the reading text, plays with meanings, and acts out scenes in his/her head (Chvalova & Stranovska, 2019).

Creative reading is the process of reading that aims at reaching the connotations and implied meanings, forming reactions to the content being read, and providing critical evaluations. In creative reading, it is expected from readers to go beyond text understanding, and produce original ideas, which are not explicitly stated within the text. This means that readers become active participants in the process of reading, and can add to what is introduced by the author. Readers also combine what is intended to be conveyed by the author with their own experiences, depending on what is indicated between the lines. In this way, it becomes possible for readers to form original ideas and new meanings (Kırmızı & Kasap, 2017).

The importance of reading lies in its ability to provide students with knowledge related to a variety of issues in the world. Reading is considered a creative activity in itself as it encourages students to make connections and explore the world. Creative reading is also based on a set of skills that enable a reader to interact with the text (Al Qatnani, 2017). Creative reading helps in providing readers with various activities in the process of comprehension, and enabling them to produce creative products and ideas related to the text topic. It also promotes developing creativity as an approach, which guides readers in making use of their imagination (Incik, 2012). In other words, creative reading enables students to comprehend both the words and the subject matter correctly, understand literary meanings, discover implied meanings, integrate their experiences with the text ideas, develop, and apply new ideas to new fields (Othman, 2022).

The activities of creative reading affect EFL learners' engagement, empowerment, motivation, higher-order thinking and independent reflection. In addition, the skills of creative reading enable learners to explore the reading texts and understand them in a more profound manner. Creative reading helps students in exploring the world and makes them emotionally and educationally enriched; hence, what creative readers



begin with is not what they end with. Therefore, creative reading is considered a rewarding experience through which the reader is allowed to engage with the material in a different way instead of just taking in information passively. Creative reading is a skill, which helps and enables the reader to reach and develop the creative thinking (Chang & Millett, 2013).

The multiplicity of points of view contributed to the varied definition of creative reading and the discrepancy in the classification of its skills. Some studies, for instance, identified the skills of creative reading in the light of the other levels of reading that creative reading implies. Some other studies identified basic skills for creative reading in the light of their relationship to creative thinking skills, namely: reading fluency, flexibility, originality, and elaboration. In addition, the final set of studies identified a number of skills to be the creative reading sub skills such as adding new ideas to the text, realizing missing elements in the text, asking thought-provoking questions about the text, employing ideas derived from the text in new situations, and prediction of events based on text information or events.

According to Russell (2012), creative reading is a skill that involves reading for inferred and implied meanings, critical evaluations, and appreciative reactions. This view was proposed early in 1976 by Andresen and Pawlak, and then adopted by many other researchers. Ebrahim (2017), for instance, proposed that for people to read creatively, they should be capable readers at a number of levels, starting from just simple decoding of words to building complex mental worlds. Adams (2012) also described the skills of creative reading as the capabilities to read for both implied and inferred meanings, critical evaluations as well as appreciative reactions.

Ocak and Karşlı (2022) stated that acquiring the skills of both critical and creative reading requires students to understand the meanings stated in the reading text and absorb its hidden meanings and messages. In other words, when students read a text from a critical perspective, they will use interpretation skills and evaluation criteria they gain from their own experiences in life and from readings. Interpreting reading texts will lead

students to use their imagination while reading; hence, they will create different perspectives and generate new information regarding text information and events.

Reading for both implied and inferred meanings include both the literal comprehension level and reading beyond the explicitly stated facts. In other words, it means reading what is between the lines. It is required when raising discussion questions such as how do you think the character in the story felt? What do you expect will happen? This type of reading basically includes literal understanding of stated facts. However, it requires the reader to go beyond, read what is implicit between the lines and perhaps produce or derive original ideas and meanings based on his/ her own experience (Adams, 2012; Russell, 2012; Qudah, 2020).

Reading for appreciative reactions also requires both literal comprehension of the text and going beyond the written words. In addition, it draws heavily upon the reader's ability to relate emotionally, employ imagery, and identify with the characters of the story. In addition, reading for critical evaluations means the reader's ability to evaluate the text critically such as distinguishing between fanciful and real tales. That is, the reader make a comparison between the story facts and his/her past experiences, and then concludes with "such a story couldn't really happen because ....". Critical reading includes evaluating the reading material by comparing it with known standards or norms, and making a judgment. In other words, it involves paying attention to comparisons, making judgments and distinguishing between real and fictional events (Adams, 2012; Russell, 2012; Qudah, 2020).

The second classification was introduced in the light of the skills of creative thinking framework introduced by Torrance in 1979. Priyatni and Martutik (2020), for instance, stated that creative reading represents an activity of reading that includes skills of creative thinking skills. The skill of creative thinking is identified with generating new ideas or combining several ones to form new ideas. In addition, creative thinking involves divergent thinking, which is a cognitive aspect characterized by fluency, flexibility, originality and elaboration (Nakano & Wechsler, 2018). Accordingly, the skills of creative reading are categorized mainly into four

skills, which are reading fluency, reading flexibility, reading originality and elaboration or detail literacy (Shively, 2011; Delacruz, 2016; Bezerra et al., 2022, Qudah; 2020, Bataineh & Al Qatnani, 2017).

**a. Fluency:** it refers to the ability of generating the largest number of ideas or appropriate responses to an incentive or a problem in a certain period. In other words, it is the skill that allows learners to produce many ideas as quickly as possible. In other words, fluency includes recalling the largest number of uses, synonyms, or benefits of specific topics or things. Fluency is considered a process of recalling information, concepts or experiences in a certain amount of time. It is also regarded as the basis on which the other abilities depend (Chválová & Stranovská, 2019).

**b. Flexibility:** it means the ability to produce varied and different ideas. In other words, it is a skill that describes the variety of ideas a person can produce (Al Qatnani, 2017). That is, it describes individuals' ability to deal with different situations freely and make necessary changes according to the requirements of the situation without hesitation (Abd Al maseeh et al., 2019). Its behavioral indicators include suggesting varied cohesions, making logical inferences, suggesting different titles, thinking about the reasons of a certain phenomenon, giving opinions regarding a certain issue and giving different explanations to a topic or an issue (Qudah, 2020).

**c. Originality:** it means the reader's ability to generate authentic and unique ideas. For the idea to be original, others should not repeat it. The basis of this skill is the assumption that people with genuine creative thinking, will not and never repeat the others' ideas; their ideas are new to them and to those around them. Therefore, it can be concluded that originality means creating new ideas, not repeated by the person himself nor the others (Abd Al maseeh et al., 2019). In other words, it means, how unusual are the ideas a person can produces. Its behavioral indicators involve predicting unique endings or suggesting unusual titles (Al Qatnani, 2017, p.31). It also includes expecting a unique ending, providing a summary to the passage and giving an explanation to the passage or a part of it (Qudah, 2020).

Russell (2012) stated that the total act of creative reading requires the reader to generate original and fresh ideas not explicitly stated in the text. In addition, the reader needs to become an active participant and adds to

what is being read. Creative reading requires imagination, thinking, and producing ideas based on the reader's thoughts. Priyatni and Martutik (2020) who believe that there is a strong association between creative reading and innovation, imagination, originality, and excellence support this view.

**d. Elaboration:** (known as detail literacy, and expansion) this skill refers to the ability to add ideas or details to widen or expand existing ideas such as adding accurate and different explanations to some idea/s. These contributions have to be unique and help in developing and enriching the idea to which they are added. It is not only about adding parts, but also integrating some different parts accurately tighter into a single cohesive unit. Thus, the skill of elaboration means the reader's ability to add new clarifications, details, elements, explanations or components (Abd Al maseeh et al., 2019).

When reviewing literature on creative reading, it is found that there are few studies on EFL creative reading in the Egyptian context. However, they were conducted in different contexts and applied to learners at stages different from the one under investigation in the current study. For instance, Kasem et al. study (2022) aimed at evaluating the performance of preparatory students of creative reading. In addition, Othman's (2022) study attempted to find out how a program including pedagogical stylistic applications and practices can be employed in teaching novel to help improve EFL students' creative reading skills at the secondary stage.

The study of Hassan et al. (2018) aimed at finding out the effect of Strategy Instruction on developing students' skills of creative reading at the second year of experimental preparatory school. Moreover, Abd Al Maseeh et al. (2019) conducted a study to examine the impact of a strategy of cognitive thinking on promoting EFL creative reading skills of secondary students. In addition, Ebrahim (2017) conducted a study to investigate whether the use of a program based on Meta-memory will develop the creative reading skills of the EFL students at secondary school. Mohammed et al. (2020), as well, conducted a study to investigate the effect of using a suggested program that is based on both interactive visuals and critical discourse analysis on developing creative reading of EFL students at secondary

school, in addition to their critical language awareness and critical thinking.

In addition, there is about no study found to investigate the relationship between creative reading and cultural intelligence, except for the study conducted by Helwa (2020) which aimed to explore the effectiveness of a program built in the light of mobile computer- supported collaborative learning as well as applications of social media in developing EFL student teachers' creative reading skills and their cultural awareness.

## 2. Cultural Intelligence

Intelligence construct has emerged early in the last century, especially since developing the Stanford-Binet test in 1916. After that, a number of proposals for adding specific intelligence constructs have emerged. These proposals included the practical intelligence by Sternberg and Wagner in 1986, emotional intelligence by Salvoey and Meyer in 1990 and cultural intelligence by Earely and Ang in 2003 (Furrer et al., 2015).

A significant competence that enables people to deal with diversity of cultures, better adapt, and adjust to intercultural contexts is cultural intelligence (Earley & Ang, 2003). Cultural intelligence is what helps people to become successful and function effectively in a multicultural or across cultural setting (Koç& Behzat, 2018). Through CQ, individuals become capable of understanding and acting appropriately in different situations in a variety of cultures (Crowne, 2013).

Although the model of cultural intelligence is recent, it is a promising framework, which facilitates the efforts of universities in providing their students with efficient and effective cross-cultural training during their years of study (Kurpis & Hunter, 2017). Individuals from different countries of the world vary in how they express themselves whether verbally or nonverbally; hence, understanding other people who are culturally different requires a certain set of abilities (Ang et al., 2015).

There are recurring, important results found by the research conducted on cultural intelligence. These results emphasize that people with higher levels of cultural intelligence can achieve better adjustment across cultures, improved personal well-being and enhanced job performance

(Zanazzi, 2017). Rockstul and Van Dyne (2018) established that cultural intelligence is related to various outcomes such as decision-making and intercultural judgment, adaptation and performance. Cultural intelligence as a multidimensional capacity helps in functioning effectively within new and diverse cultural contexts (MacNab, 2012). It also enables people to achieve continuous learning and a better coexistence with other people who are culturally different (Gonçalves et al., 2016).

Earley and Ang (2003) proposed a model that involves three parts namely cognitive/ metacognitive, behavior and motivation components. This draws on the conceptualization of intelligence by Sternberg and Detterman in 1986 as a multi loci construct. Furrer et al. (2015) explained that it encompasses a set of knowledge and skills that interact together and are linked by the cultural metacognition, which enables individuals to shape, select, adapt to the cultural aspects of his/her environment. Cultural intelligence is a capability composed of knowledge, skills and metacognition. In addition, Johnson and Buko (2013) referred to CQ components as CQ knowledge, Strategy, Drive, and Action.

The four dimensions, although qualitatively different, they represent the facets of the overall capability to manage effectively in settings that are culturally different. The combination of these dimensions defines the overall CQ, but it is not necessary to find a correlation between them (Gozzoli& Gazzaroli, 2018). In addition, according to Thomas et al. (2015), cultural intelligence has three distinct dimensions. The first one is cultural knowledge, which includes both the general knowledge and the content specific knowledge about a culture or cultures. That is, this dimension enables individuals to understand how other people from a different culture talk, work and interact with each other. The second is cultural metacognition, which refers to the individual's ability to monitor his or her own cognitive processes and effective state in a conscious and deliberate way. It is described as one's ability to regulate and control their own thinking and learning. In addition, it includes a person's ability to deliberately and consciously monitor his/ her own knowledge processes, affective and cognitive states as well as the ability to regulate such states in the light of some stated goals.

The final one is cultural skill. This is an overt dimension and the most visible one that can easily be observed. When an individual demonstrates appropriate behaviors that suit the given cultural context requirements, he is said to have a cultural skill. These behaviors included verbal and nonverbal ones. In addition, individuals can readily adapt and adjust to different cultural situations if they have behavioral flexibility whether verbal or non-verbal. Having this ability, of constantly adjusting one's own behaviors "verbal and non-verbal" to suit the given cultural context needs indicates that this person is culturally intelligent. This dimension is described as the most visible because it can be easily observed (Presbitero, 2020; Thomas et al., 2015)

The CQ research has a relatively short history; however, the concept utility has been widely recognized by business professionals and researchers alike (Kurpis & Hunter, 2017). In this regard, research on cultural intelligence has focused on investigating either conceptualization the term such as Furrer et al. (2015) study, or on investigating whether it can be developed using different interventions such as Crowne's study (2013) that examined the effect of cultural exposure on cultural intelligence and emotional intelligence; and Kurpis and Hunter's study (2017) that aimed at empirically exploring the effectiveness of a proposed approach based on contact theory, experiential learning theory and the model of cultural intelligence in developing students' cultural intelligence. In addition, Little (2012) studied whether there is an effect of educational experience (class level) on students' cultural intelligence.

The relationship between cultural intelligence and the constructs has also been studied. However, the relationship between it and creative reading skills was not among the research conducted in this area, except for the study of Zanazzi (2017) who attempted to explore if there was a link between cultural intelligence and creativity in a certain context, which is a program introduced to American college students who are doing their traineeship in Rome, Italy. The other studies include exploring the relationship between cultural intelligence, personality traits, and intercultural communication competence (Yeke & Semerciöz's, 2016); examining the cultural intelligence and specific self-efficacy relationship (Rehg & Gundlach, 2012) and exploring the impact of a classroom-based



diversity course and its intentional cross-cultural experiences on cultural intelligence of doctoral students (Phillips, 2020) .

Through the literature reviewed, it is evident that more research is needed to investigate cultural intelligence in the Egyptian context, and to the relationship, if any, between cultural intelligence and EFL creative reading skills. Therefore, the current study attempted to investigate the relationship between Faculty of Education English Majors' creative reading skills and their cultural intelligence.

## **Materials and Method**

### **Participants**

The participants of the study were 94 of third-year English section at the Faculty of Education, Fayoum University. All the students who participated in the experiment were volunteers; the researcher announced for the experiment and told students to write down a list of the names of who would like to participate. The researcher introduced the study purpose briefly to all the participants, and then they were asked to sign their names if they were happy to participate in the study.

### **Instruments**

The present study made use of the following instruments:

#### **1. An EFL Creative Reading Test.**

##### **1.1. Test description**

This test was used to identify students' creative reading pre and post the treatment Test instructions are clear and simple so that students can understand them easily. They asked students to read each question carefully before starting to answer. The pre-posttest consisted of 30 multiple questions asking about the different levels of reading (i.e. literal, inferential and critical) as a prerequisite of creative reading, as well as 10 open-ended questions asking about the sub skills of creative reading (i.e. fluency, flexibility, originality and elaboration). These questions are preceded by different passages tackling various types of texts (e.g. narrative, informational, poetry...etc.)

##### **1.2. Test Validity**



To ensure test validity, the researcher submitted it to a group of EFL specialists to judge its items concerning the following: suitability of the test items to students' level, suitability of each test item to measure the skill it is designed for, suitability of the test as a whole to its intended goal (assessing creative reading) and clarity of the instructions and statements

### 1.3. Test Reliability

In order to establish the reliability of the creative reading test in the current study, it was administered to a group of 15 fourth year English section students at the Faculty of Education, Fayoum university students. Cronbach's Alfa formula was used to estimate the test reliability. Reliability of the test was found to be (0.804) which is a high level of reliability, as the table 1 below shows:

Table 1

*Reliability Values of the Four Sub Skills and of the Test Itself as a Whole*

No	Sub skill	Reliability level	Sig. level
1.	Literal	0.823	0.01
2.	Inferential	0.710	0.01
3.	Critical	0.747	0.01
4.	Creative	0.811	0.01
	<b>Creative reading test as a whole</b>	0.804	0.01

### 1.4. Test Timing

After conducting piloting the test, the researcher specified the time needed for answering the test administration by adding the times taken by all the students and dividing the whole time by their number. The average time needed for answering the test was 120 minutes.

### 1.5. Scoring

Assessing students' answers on the test open-ended questions required building a scoring rubric. Hence, according to this rubric each question was scored and, in turn, the whole test was scored too. The total score of the test became 70 marks because the mark of each question of the multiple choice ones is 1 mark, then the total score of the 20 MCQ questions was (20 marks). In addition, each question of the open-ended ones is graded according to 5 levels of performance (based on the parameters given in the rubric), and then the full mark of each question was (5). After that, by summing the scores of all the open-ended questions, the total score became

50 marks. Therefore, the total score of the test questions (both MCQ and open-ended) was 45 marks.

### 1.5.1. Test Administration

After estimating the suitable time for taking the creative reading test based on pilot testing, the pre-test was administered to the study participants before introducing the training program to provide data about the creative reading level of the participants. The test was administered on the 4<sup>th</sup> of October 2022. Then, the creative reading scoring rubric was used to assess students' answers on the open-ended questions. The results revealed that the mean scores were (23.46) with standard deviation (6.73) for the treatment group.

The post-test was administered to both the treatment and the control groups, after the implementation of the study program; on the 6<sup>th</sup> of December 2022. The test was administered as a post one four days after the end of the training program with the purpose of investigating whether there was an advance evident in the level of the study participants' creative reading or not. Thus, the students' answers were assessed in light of the scoring rubric, and then the data recorded, and statistically analyzed to achieve this purpose. Post-test conditions were relatively the same as those of the pre-test in terms of place and time.

## 2. An EFL Creative Reading Scoring Rubric

### 2.1. Construction

The creative reading scoring rubric aimed at analyzing participants' responses to the pre-post creative reading test and giving them scores. In order to design the rubric, the researcher reviewed the literature related to the creative reading skills of and how to assess them.

### 2.2. Parameters

The following parameters are the ones that were included in the final version of the rubric:

- **Fluency:** to assess students' ability to produce the largest number of correct ideas in the allocated time. The questions (24& 29) were assessed according to this parameter.

- **Flexibility:** to assess students' ability to suggest various, suitable ideas in the allocated time. So, the 21<sup>st</sup>, 23<sup>th</sup>, 25<sup>th</sup>, 30<sup>th</sup> questions were assessed according to this parameter.
- **Originality:** this parameter refers to the ability to present unfamiliar, unique ideas to the readable text, and the ability to suggest new endings to the text. The test questions no. 26 & 28 were assessed in light of this criterion.
- **Elaboration:** refers to a reader's ability to add new expanding ideas to the readable text, and to suggest more details about the text. The test questions no. 22 & 27 were assessed in light of this criterion.

Five levels of students' performance were described in each feature using a five level rating scale (graded from 5 to 1): 5 means that the student's performance is outstanding, 4 means 'above expectations', 3 means 'satisfactory', 2 means 'below expectations', and 0 means 'unsatisfactory'.

### 2.3. Validity of the rubric

To establish the validity of the rubric, the researcher submitted it to a group of TEFL specialists to judge its items regarding the following points: relatedness of the parameters of the rubric to creative reading, suitability of the rubric to its intended goal (assessing creative reading) and suitability of the rubric for discriminating between different levels of students' skills.

## 3. A Cultural intelligence Scale

The scale aimed at identifying cultural intelligence levels of third year English majors before and after the implementation of the conflict resolution strategy program. After reviewing a number of studies on students' cultural intelligence, the researcher designed the cultural intelligence scale, taking into consideration the following points: assessing items that are positively and negatively worded, using clear items, using simple and direct items and addressing different dimensions of cultural intelligence.

### 3.1. Content of the Scale

The scale consisted of 32 items that belong to four main dimensions. These dimensions are: cognitive, metacognitive, motivational and behavioral.

- **Cognitive:** a competence that is based on the person's knowledge of different cultures practices, norms, and conventions as well as the knowledge of social, legal, economic and value systems of these cultures (Furrer et al., 2015).
- **Metacognitive:** a competence that is based on the person's consciously questioning his/her own cultural assumptions, reflecting on them and then developing his/ her own cultural knowledge and skills (Zanazzi, 2017).
- **Motivational:** means having intrinsic interest in diverse cultures that motivates people interact with culturally different and to learn about the existing similarities and differences of these cultures. (Gooden et al., 2017).
- **Behavioral:** an ability to adapt or adjust behaviors that are suitable for the cultural environment (MacNab, 2012).

### 3.2. Scale Validity

After reviewing the related literature, the study built the scale. It consisted of four dimensions (namely cognitive, metacognitive, motivational, and behavioral). Then, the study formulated some statements for every dimension based on their operational definitions.

#### *Content Validity*

To ensure validity of the scale, it was submitted to specialized jury members in the field of curriculum and instruction (TEFL). The jury members were asked to judge it regarding the following: relatedness of the dimensions to the general term (cultural intelligence), relatedness of sub-items to each general dimension, clarity and wording of the statements and the suitability of the scale as a whole for assessing English majors' cultural intelligence.

The first version of the scale consisted of 67 items, but, based on the jury members' suggestions, 35 items were removed and the rest were 32 items. Therefore, the final version of the scale included 32 items.

#### *Construct Validity*

Construct validity refers to whether a scale or test measures the construct adequately. For estimating the construct validity of the scale, the researcher conducted factor analysis using the Varimax method for this

purpose. Factor loadings, which were greater than 0.40, were considered important, so six items were removed. Regarding the dimensions of the scale, factor loadings exceeded the loading cut-off (0.40), indicating practically significant levels.

### 3.3. Reliability

To establish the reliability of the scale, the Cronbach Alpha method was used. The reliability values of the scale dimensions ranged from (0.75) to (0.92). These reliability values were all significant at (0.01) level. The reliability level of the scale as a whole was (0.90), which is an acceptable level of reliability. Table (2) below shows the reliability values of the four dimensions of the scale and of the scale as a whole

Table 2

*The Reliability Values of the Four Dimensions and of the Scale as a Whole*

No.	Dimension	Reliability level	Sig. level
1.	Cognitive	0.90	0.01
2.	Metacognitive	0.75	0.01
3.	Behavioral	0.82	0.01
4.	Motivational	0.92	0.01
	<b>Cultural intelligence scale as a whole</b>	0.90	0.01

### 4.3.2. Scoring

The final version of the scale consisted of 32 items, for each item, participants were given a mark out of '5' according to their response:

**1=** "never true of me", **2=** "usually not true of me", **3=** "sometimes true of me", **4=** "usually true of me" and **5=** "always true of me"

Therefore, the total mark of the scale was 160. The scale included some negative items, which were scored through giving participants a reversed mark.

### 3.4. Administration

After establishing the validity of the scale, it was pre-administered to the control and treatment groups on the 4<sup>th</sup> of October 2022, a week prior to

the experiment. The purpose of this pre-administration was to identify students' cultural intelligence level. So, the students' answers were analyzed and data were collected, recorded, and statistically analyzed. Then, after implementing the training program, the scale was post-administered to the two groups on 6<sup>th</sup> of December 2022, 4 days after the experiment. The purpose of this post-administration was to identify whether there was a change in their cultural intelligence. Students' answers were marked; data were collected, tabulated, and statistically analyzed in order to record any progress in students' cultural intelligence. Post cultural intelligence scale conditions were similar to those of the pre one in terms of place and time.

## Findings and discussion

The current study aimed to examine the Relationship between Faculty of Education English Majors' Creative Reading Skills and their Cultural Intelligence. For this purpose, quantitative analysis of data was used for finding out whether they are related.

### 1. Statistical Analysis

To analyze the data collected through administering the tools before and after introducing the training program, the current study made use of:

- Descriptive statistics (such as means and standard deviation)
- Inferential statistics (such as t-test correlations)
- The statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS, v.22) was used to calculate the t-test value that points out the difference between mean scores of the study participants in the pre and post administration of the creative reading test and the cultural intelligence scale.
- The effect size was calculated using Cohen formula:  $2 \times t \div \sqrt{df}$ :  
Where,  
d = Cohen's d Value      t = t - test Value      df = Degrees of Freedom.
- The coefficient of determination ( $r^2$ ) which is the standard measure of effect size for correlation.

### Testing the hypothesis of the study

The study hypothesis stated that:

- *There is a positive statistically significant correlation between the study participant's scores in the post administration of the creative reading skills test and the cultural intelligence scale.*

This hypothesis was intended to find out whether there was a statistically significant correlation between the study participants' cultural intelligence level and creative reading. For this purpose, the researcher calculated the Pearson correlation coefficient for the relationship between the study participants' scores obtained from the post administration of cultural intelligence scale and creative reading test.

Table (3)

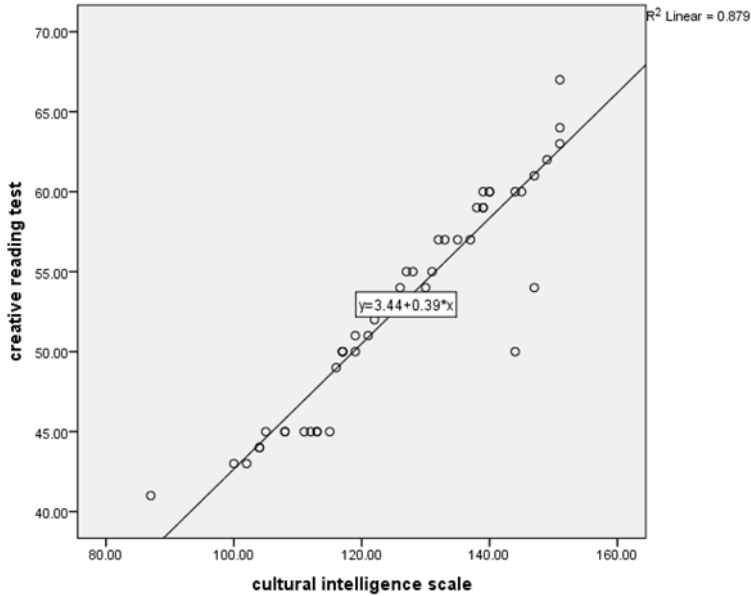
*The Correlation between the Scores of the Cultural Intelligence Scale, and the Creative Reading Test*

	Cultural intelligence scale	Creative reading test
Cultural intelligence scale	1	0.937**
Creative reading test	0.937**	1

\*\* means that correlation is significant at the 0.01 level

Table (3) also shows that there was a positive statistically significant correlation between the scores obtained from the post administration of the cultural intelligence scale and the creative reading test. The correlation coefficient was (0.937), which is significant at 0.01 level. So, the hypothesis of the study was accepted. This indicates that there is a positive statistically significant correlation between students' cultural intelligence and their creative reading. This means that, when learners' creative reading increased, their cultural intelligence increased as well. In addition, the figure below shows the coefficient of determination ( $r^2$ ) which is the standard measure of effect size for correlation (Cronk, 2008).

*Figure 1*

*Representing the Coefficient Determination*

The coefficient of determination ( $r^2$ ) was calculated by squaring the  $r$ -value. Thus,  $r^2 = 0.937^2 = 0.879$

In addition, the correlation between the creative reading test and the dimensions of cultural intelligence scale was calculated. The correlation values obtained are shown in table (4).

Table 4

*The Correlation between the Creative Reading Test and the Dimensions of Cultural Intelligence Scale*

Dimensions	Creative reading
Cultural knowledge	0.940**
Cultural metacognition	0.835**
Cultural motivation	0.873**
Cultural skills	0.809**

The values given in table 4 shows that the students' creative reading was positively correlated to their performance in all the dimensions of cultural intelligence. All the correlation coefficients were positively significant at (0.01) level.

#### 4. Discussion



The current study aimed investigated the correlational relationship between students' creative reading and cultural intelligence. The results revealed that the two variables were positively correlated, and the correlation coefficient was (0.937). This means that as the students' writing performance enhances, their writing self-efficacy enhances as well. The aforementioned result is in harmony with the findings of previous study. Zanazzi (2017), for example, attempted to explore if there was a link between cultural intelligence and creativity in a certain context, which is a program introduced to American college students who are doing their traineeship in Rome, Italy. Analysis of trainees' field journals was the base of the research. Proofs of *divergent* and *critical thinking* were looked for during reading and coding these journals, assuming that they represent important components of the creative process. The study results revealed that the two components consistently exist in the journals, which were written by trainees whose placement supervisors and academic tutors assessed them positively. In addition, creativity including divergent and critical thinking are likely to be higher for those who show openness to and interest in the new culture encountered and are able to describe and compare it with their own.

This finding goes also in line with the findings of the correlational study conducted by Soldatova and Geer (2013) to investigate the relationship between cultural intelligence and language fluency. They concluded that a positive relationship has been claimed between cultural intelligence and the language skills. In addition, Altememi et al. (2015) emphasized the idea that cultural intelligence has been associated with the creative capabilities when they investigated the relation between the workers' in 5-star hotels creative capabilities and their cultural intelligence in the city of Amman. For measuring the creative capabilities, a scale consisting of 3 dimensions, namely: flexibility, fluency, and originality was adopted. In addition, to measure the cultural intelligence, a scale consisting of 3 dimensions (cognition (knowledge), motivation and behavior) was used.

It has been stated that the area of creative reading is ignored; i.e. most textbooks of reading, devote no or little space to it and even when they do so, they usually incorporate it with critical reading. However, creative reading is an area that needs special treatment, emphasis, treatment, and

techniques (Guniran, 2013). In addition, the cultural intelligence research is relatively new, thus it needs more research for better understanding. Consequently, just a few studies were conducted in this area.

### **Study implications**

In light of the current study results, the researcher recommends the following:

- Students should be trained in reading creatively to become active participants in the process of reading.
- Using different types of practice (e.g. modeling, guided and free practice) is recommended to help students to benefit from what they study, fully comprehend it and apply what they have learned effectively.
- Since there is a strong relationship between cultural intelligence and creative reading, teachers should play a vital role by clarifying the cultural issues included or implied in the reading material.
- Reading courses have to be designed based on an analysis of students' needs and problems and their activities need to focus on all the levels of reading comprehension from the literal level to the creative one.
- Integrating the conflict resolution strategies (on which the program is based) into English reading courses in Egypt as they facilitate developing students' creative reading skills.
- Promoting the use of and increasing the frequency of employing various strategies to provide students with explicit strategy instruction and inform them of the significant benefits of employing these strategies. Therefore, teachers of reading are recommended to deliver a reading strategy questionnaire to students at the beginning of the academic year to diagnose and identify students' needs. In this way, they will be able to develop a well-structured course design and narrow their scope of interest and specify their objectives at the same time.
- Teaching reading should focus on developing both the cognitive aspect (e.g. various reading skills.) and the affective aspect of reading (e.g. cultural intelligence etc.). This can be helped by using some tools to identify students' cognitive and affective needs (e.g. tests, self-reporting tools) and searching for suitable techniques to address their needs.

- Stakeholders in education have to put into consideration and investigate EFL learners' sense of cultural intelligence because it is closely related to their language performance in different domains.
- Interest in the EFL classroom should be shifted from the teacher to the learner; there should be a focus on learner strategies not teaching methods and techniques. This is because the use of learning strategies helps EFL learners to be autonomous and independent learners and users of the language.

### **Suggestions for Further Study**

In light of the present study results, the researcher suggests the following topics:

- New studies should be conducted that may contribute to providing more investigation of intelligence, creativity, and reading development in the early years of literacy for better understanding of these skills in the educational context.
- A qualitative study for investigating the creative reading habits used by the best EFL students is also needed.
- Examining the interrelatedness of affective factors in EFL learning: cultural intelligence in relation to attitudes toward reading can be a good area to investigate.
- More studies to investigate how students develop cultural intelligence are needed.
- A training program based on another set of conflict resolution strategies for developing EFL pre-service teachers' creative reading skills can be conducted.
- The relationship between creative reading cultural intelligence of young children needs also to be investigated.
- The teachers' cultural intelligence and its relationship with their teaching practices of reading is an issue that needs to be investigated.

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