

Cinema as a didactic tool in the secondary school foreign language classroom: French

IMAD BOUSSIF

ESTEFANÍA SÁNCHEZ AUÑÓN

University of Murcia

Received: 04 June 2020 / Accepted: 05 October 2020

DOI: <https://doi.org/10.30827/portalin.v0i35.15460>

ISSN paper edition: 1697-7467, ISSN digital edition: 2695-8244

ABSTRACT: The seventh art forms an essential part of the students' daily lives; additionally, it has been asserted that it is a highly advantageous didactic tool for high school foreign language learners. Thus, the purpose of this empirical study is twofold: to explore high school learners' perception on the didactic exploitation of films in the French classroom, and to determine whether or not the cinema-based approach is as beneficial for high school French students as it seems. Accordingly, a cinema-based teaching unit was put into practice in two high school French classrooms and, afterwards, the thirty-five participants were asked to fill in a questionnaire in order to examine their views on this methodology and analyse its effects on their language learning process. The results obtained have revealed that high school French students have a very positive opinion on the cinema-based approach and that this method is motivating and helps learners to enhance their linguistic and sociocultural competences.

Keywords: cinema, benefits, FLT, Compulsory Secondary Education, student perception.

El cine como herramienta didáctica en el aula de secundaria de Lengua Extranjera: Francés

RESUMEN: El séptimo arte forma una parte esencial de la vida diaria de los estudiantes; además, se ha afirmado que es una herramienta didáctica muy ventajosa para los estudiantes de lenguas extranjeras. Por lo tanto, este estudio empírico tiene un objetivo doble: explorar la percepción de los estudiantes acerca del uso de películas en el aula de francés, y comprobar si este enfoque es tan beneficioso para los estudiantes de francés de secundaria como parece. Por consiguiente, se puso en práctica una unidad didáctica basada en este método en dos clases de francés de secundaria, y los treinta y cinco participantes completaron un cuestionario para conocer su opinión sobre esta metodología y examinar los efectos que ha tenido en su proceso de aprendizaje de la lengua. Los resultados que se han obtenido revelan que los estudiantes de secundaria de francés tienen una opinión muy positiva sobre el enfoque basado en cine y que este método es motivador y ayuda a los discentes a mejorar su competencia lingüística y sociocultural.

Palabras clave: cine, beneficios, enseñanza del francés, educación secundaria obligatoria, percepción del estudiante.

1. INTRODUCTION

There is a global dissatisfaction with foreign language teaching at Compulsory Secondary Education (CSE) as it is rather ineffective. Specifically, the teaching of French at high school is often unsuccessful owing to the following issues: demotivated students; the secondary role of the French language in the curriculum; outdated teaching strategies; and the use of grammatically graded textbooks which often include stereotyped cultural aspects and bilingual vocabulary lists (Abenoja & De Coursey, 2019; Carr, 1999; Jovanović, 2017; Schulz, 1990; Stern & Weinrib, 1977). Consequently, several recommendations have been made in numerous Symposia organized by the Council of Europe so as to improve FLT at European high schools. These recommendations include, for instance, focusing more on students' individual interests and tackling humanistic and affective aspects when teaching the language (Stern & Weinrib, 1977).

One of the most effective teaching tools in this respect is cinema because, as the seventh art has become an integral part of the youths' everyday life, it allows teachers to approach students while updating the methodologies they put into practice in the classroom. Furthermore, cinema provides French learners with several benefits (Appetito, 2019; Kanelloupolou, 2019; Rousse, 2006). In fact, multiple scholars have shown that watching films is one of students' favourite leisure activities to enhance their linguistic competence; it is not surprising, then, that they are willing to work on this didactic tool at high school (Herron et al., 2002; Pegrum et al., 2005). Nonetheless, cinema is hardly used in the French classroom due to scarcity of resources, lack of teacher training, time constrains, and the practical challenges it presents (Kanelloupolou et al., 2019; Kerrita, 2017; Pegrum et al., 2005). Indeed, the few French teachers who include cinema in their lessons do not exploit its full potential since they often use it inappropriately. Most of them make use of films just as a time-filler and as a reward, that is to say, without any pedagogical objective in mind (Arey, 1993; Herrero, 2016; Giunta, 1989; Kerrita, 2017; Michalczek, 1976; Pegrum et al., 2005; Rousse, 2006; Rouxel-Cubberly, 2014). Hence, the motivation for this study lies in the promotion of an alternative method which can contribute to solve the above-mentioned problems concerning the teaching of French at high school while showing secondary school French teachers how to take full advantage of cinema as a didactic resource.

Countless researchers have already explored the pedagogical use of films for foreign language teaching. However, the currently available research on the cinema-based approach for FLT is scarce as most of these studies have been focused on the learning of other languages, especially of English and Japanese (Kaiser, 2014; Maury, 2012). In addition, the scarce research on the use of cinema in the French classroom is inconclusive for several reasons. To begin with, it is mainly of a theoretical (Appetito, 2019; Giunta, 1989; Markey, 1976; Neto & Sousa, 2019; Scanlan, 1988) and didactic nature (Mencová, 2016; Michalczek, 1976; Rousse, 2006), neither of which provides any empirical data. Moreover, the only empirical studies which have been conducted so far have not shed enough light on this matter because they have mostly examined the University context, teacher perceptions, and only a very limited number of the advantages of this methodology has been tested (Arey, 1993; Karadag, 2009; Kerrita, 2017; Pegrum et al., 2005; Rouxel-Cubberly, 2014). In fact, the results of the bibliographic search reveal that the most recent studies on this topic have

revolved around just one benefit of the cinema-based approach, mainly, around vocabulary acquisition (Bairstow & Lavaur, 2017; Kanelloupolou 2019), listening comprehension (Becker & Sturm, 2017), and cultural awareness (Mencová, 2016; Molina-García & Rúa, 2017). Thus, producing empirical research which examines high school students' perception and testing all the advantages this method has for them are necessary. Accordingly, the key core hypotheses that guide this study are: a) high school French learners have a positive view on the didactic use of cinema, and b) the cinema-based approach provides secondary school French students with multiple linguistic and pedagogical advantages. In view of the literature review described above, this study may prove to be useful as it fills several research gaps. The study has been conducted in a high school, examining, therefore, the unresearched Compulsory Secondary Education context; in place of teachers' perceptions, French learners' views on the didactic use of films have been explored; and all the benefits the cinema-based approach has for these students have been analysed at the same time.

1.1. Benefits of the cinema-based approach for FLT

Firstly, it must be clarified that the cinema-based approach is not an established methodology for teaching foreign languages such as, for instance, the well-known audiolingual method. As a consequence, there is not a clear conceptual framework to be considered when analysing the didactic exploitation of films. Instead, throughout this section, the authors of this paper have presented a synthesis of the major findings on the use of the cinema-based approach for FLT so as to provide readers with a comprehensive insight into this emerging teaching practice.

Films have been shown to provide high school French learners with diverse benefits which fall within three main dimensions: (i) the linguistic dimension, (ii) the motivational dimension, (iii) and the inter/cultural dimension, and they will be explored in-depth below.

1.1.1. The linguistic dimension

Several experts in the field (Arey, 1993; Kanelloupolou et al., 2019; Rousse, 2006; Scanlan, 1988) have affirmed that, when French films are used for pedagogical purposes, students improve their language skills and their knowledge on French grammar and vocabulary.

The didactic use of cinema helps high school French learners to enhance their listening skills because, when watching films, students understand the aural input they receive more easily thanks to the visual support (Becker and Sturm; 2017). Moreover, the cinema-based approach also helps high school French learners to hone their reading skills on the grounds that it encourages them to read more. Students tend to regard reading as an irrelevant and boring skill (Cervera & Núñez-Delgado, 2018). Nevertheless, Pereira and Pinheiro-Mariz assert that the use of cinema in the French classroom stimulates learners to explore multiple text genres like literary texts (2018). Also, cinema may be used as a contextual background to design reading tasks for practice; for instance, examining the film script or reading film reviews (Neto & Sousa, 2019; Scanlan, 1988).

Added to listening and reading, the seventh art is highly beneficial concerning the productive language skills too. The cinema-based approach allows high school French learners to develop their speaking skills because it provides them with opportunities to practice it. As an example, students may be asked to comment on various aspects of any film by taking

part in a debate (Appetito, 2019; Markey, 1976). As argued by Arey, after watching a film in the classroom, students are so eager to share their views that they are the ones who start the discussion (1993). Additionally, as films often portray different accents and intonations, constant exposure to cinema allows students to become familiar with those features of the French language and, therefore, helps them to better imitate French native speakers' speech (Kaiser, 2014; Karadag, 2009; Misařová, 2013). With regard to writing, the seventh art gives high school French teachers the opportunity to design stimulating writing tasks. By way of illustration, students may be asked to write about their interpretation and reactions to a film (Markey, 1976; Scanlan, 1988).

The pedagogical exploitation of films has been shown to be highly advantageous even when learning French grammar and vocabulary. Cinema helps students to learn grammar because learners deal with real and contextualized examples of the language. Also, the actors' gestures and expressions help them to better understand the use of complex linguistic structures (Karadag, 2009; Piwowar in Mencová, 2016; Rousse, 2006). Likewise, as films often reflect a wide range of concepts through the places and situations depicted, constant exposure to this authentic audiovisual material allows students to enrich their French vocabulary, including idiomatic and real-life expressions (Arey, 1993; Bairstow & Lavaur, 2017; Kanelloupolou, 2019; Karadag, 2009). In fact, the visual and sound cues of films help French learners to grasp the meaning of lexical structures, making it easier for them to memorize new French words (Coste & Ferenczi in Rousse, 2006; Scanlan, 1988). This assertion is theoretically supported by several constructs, namely, the dual-coding theory (DCT) and the cognitive theory of multimedia learning (CTML). These theories imply that presenting new contents through both verbal and visual representational modes at the same time facilitates acquisition (Kanelloupolou, 2019), and that is the manner in which new lexical content is shown to students by means of films.

1.1.2. The motivational dimension

Motivating students has lately become a tough task, which is something that has led teachers to spend a huge amount of time trying to design more stimulating lessons (Jovanović, 2017). As held by Maury, the seventh art may be a solution to this problem since it is a highly motivating resource regardless of students' level and of the subject to be taught (2012). In accordance with this argument, Appetito (2019), Champoux (1999), Karadag (2009), Michalczyk (1976), and Tamarkin (in Scanlan 1988) have stated that cinema is an extremely stimulating teaching resource for French learners for two main reasons which will be further explained below.

Together with television and the Internet, the seventh art is one of the most common mass media products, and it forms an important part of youths' leisure experience (Appetito, 2019). As high school students are interested in films, the cinema-based approach stimulates them to learn French more than textbooks do (Appetito, 2019; Karadag, 2009; Tamarkin, in Scanlan 1988). Indeed, Michalczyk demonstrated throughout his study that the didactic exploitation of films encouraged participants to continue studying the French language (1976).

Furthermore, multiple researchers have shown that some situations which take place in the high school foreign language classroom such as speaking activities may cause stress and anxiety, intense emotions which hinder learning (Abreu 2016; Pastor & Miller, 2019). As highlighted by Champoux (1999) and Karadag (2009), since cinema contributes to re-

ducing anxiety, it helps to create a friendlier and more stimulating learning environment. In addition, most students enjoy from comedy films (Karadag, 2009), and, according to Shade (1996), humour also affects students' motivation levels. Hence, if comedy films are used in the high school French classroom, students will have a good time and, as a result, they may feel both comfortable and motivated to learn.

1.1.3. The inter/cultural dimension

Given the ethnic diversity which is found in high school classrooms nowadays, culture has become an essential part of the curriculum, especially, with regard to the teaching of a foreign language (Lange & Klee in Herron et al., 2002; Molina-García & Rúa, 2017). In this respect, many scholars (Mencová, 2016; Misařová, 2013; Rouxel-Cubberly, 2014) have provided evidence to show that authentic audio-visual materials like films help students to learn about the foreign culture.

With films, learners are shown daily customs, clothing styles, traditional food, music, social roles, institutions, politics, leisure, and urbanism, among others (Herrero, 2016; Michalczyk, 1976; Misařová, 2013; Rouxel-Cubberly, 2014; Scanlan, 1988), key elements which give students an insight into the French community (Grubba, 2020; Herron et al., 2002). Moreover, films portray nonverbal and verbal cultural signs such as proxemics, kinesics, greetings, and fillers, which learners need to master in order to manage in a French-speaking context (Mencová, 2016; Scanlan, 1988).

2. METHOD

2.1. Context

The study has been carried out in a monolingual school located in San Cristóbal de La Laguna, in the Canary Islands, Spain. This school is a cooperative society, and, therefore, it is a private educational centre which includes Infant Education, Primary Education, and Compulsory Secondary Education.

2.2. Participants

In the school where this study has been conducted, there is only one group of students per educational level. As a consequence, two groups of students from two different educational levels were asked to take part in the study in order to be able to contrast the results. Nevertheless, the learners' and their parents' consent were obtained before carrying out the research tasks. Participants received information with regards to the conditions of the study and were asked for permission to use the results obtained for research purposes.

The sample was comprised of thirty-five high school students who were in the third and fourth years of Compulsory Secondary Education. Regarding the third year of CSE, twenty-one students took part in the research, nine of them boys and twelve of them girls. As for the fourth year of CSE, this group was comprised of fourteen students and, in this case, eight of them were boys and six of them were girls. Taking this information into account,

it can be stated that these students formed a balanced group of participants in terms of sex because, in total, there were seventeen males and eighteen females. Concerning nationality, most students were Spanish. Moreover, they had a very low French level and they were rather demotivated at the beginning of the research.

2.3. Research design and procedure

Firstly, the authors of this paper designed a didactic unit based on three French films: *Le Petit Nicolas* (2009), by Laurent Tirard; *Indigènes* (2006), by Rachid Bouchareb; and *Sur Le Chemin De L'École* (2013), by Pascal Plisson, (see Appendix 1). This cinema-based teaching unit was divided into three sessions, and, then, it was put into practice in the two groups of high school students who participated in the study.

After implementing the cinema-based teaching unit in the two high school French classrooms, the participants were asked to fill in a questionnaire with the aim of scrutinizing their perception on this methodology and determining whether or not the use of cinema had been beneficial for them when learning French as a second language. The questionnaire consists of eight yes or no questions about the cinema-based approach itself and, also, about the effects the exploitation of films had on the students' language learning process (see Appendix 2). Afterwards, the participants' answers were gathered, and a quantitative methodology was followed to analyse the results obtained.

3. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

3.1. Results obtained from the questionnaire

3.1.1. Question 1

The first question was aimed at knowing if the learners regarded the cinema-based approach as a novel methodology or if, on the contrary, their French teachers had already used cinema in the classroom before.

Is it the first time that you learn French by means of films in the high school classroom?

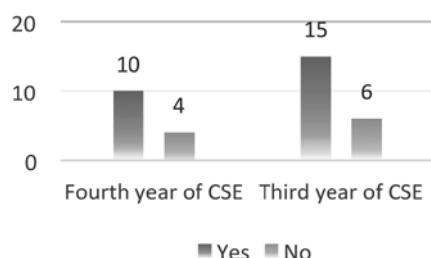


Figure 1. Graphic representation of the students' results (Question 1)

With regard to the third year of CSE, fifteen out of twenty-one students stated that it had been the first time that they had learnt French by means of cinema in the secondary school classroom. As for the fourth year of CSE, ten out of fourteen students answered affirmatively to the question. Hence, only ten out of thirty-five participants had already worked on films in the high school French classroom before this study was carried out, which means that the cinema-based approach was a completely new methodology for most of the learners who took part in the research.

3.1.2. Question 2

The second question deals with the frequency with which the participants watched films in their daily lives.

Do you often watch films at home or at the cinema?

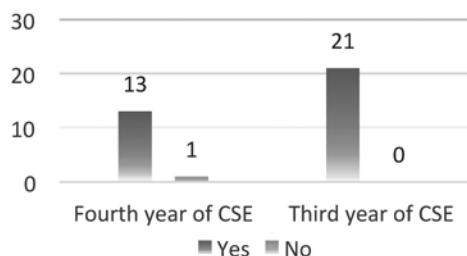


Figure 2. Graphic representation of the students' results (Question 2)

In the fourth year of CSE, only one student answered negatively to this question. Nevertheless, in the third year of CSE, as can be visually perceived in Figure 2, the affirmative answer was unanimous. In fact, in the second part of this question (see Appendix 2), most of these students noted that they watched films more than once a week, which demonstrates that watching films is one of these learners' common leisure activities.

3.1.3. Question 3

In order to obtain comprehensive results from the questionnaire, discovering whether or not the participants had any previous knowledge on French cinema was needed too. Consequently, they were asked about it in the third question. In addition, those participants who had answered affirmatively were also asked to detail which French films they had watched before the research in the second part of the question (see Appendix 2).

Did you know any French film before taking part in this research?

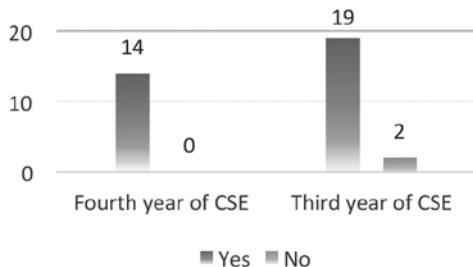


Figure 3. Graphic representation of the students' results (Question 3).

The majority of the participants had some previous knowledge on French cinema as only two students from the third group of CSE answered negatively to this question. Thus, thirty-three out of thirty-five participants had already watched French films before taking part in this study. Moreover, it is worth highlighting that most of these thirty-three students knew the same French films: *Le Fabuleux Destin d'Amélie Poulain* (2001) and *Les Choristes* (2004), films which they had previously watched in the French classroom.

3.1.4. Question 4

The fourth question was aimed at examining the level of satisfaction of the participants concerning the use of the cinema-based approach in the high school French classroom. Accordingly, they were asked if they liked the teaching unit that had been implemented.

Did you like the cinema-based French lessons you have attended during this study?

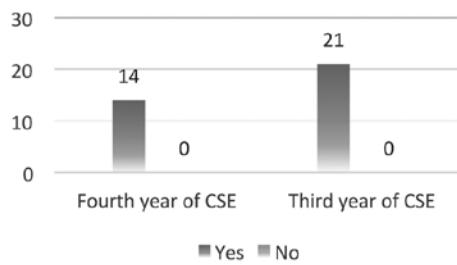


Figure 4. Graphic representation of the students' results (Question 4).

As can be observed in Figure 4, 100% of the answers to the fourth question were affirmative, and, therefore, all the participants were satisfied with the cinema-based teaching unit that was put into practice during the research. Indeed, even the learners in the third year of CSE, who were the most demotivated group of participants before taking part in the

study, stated that they had enjoyed the lessons. Furthermore, the majority of these students wrote positive additional comments next to their affirmative answers. Many participants claimed that films were a very entertaining and useful didactic tool for learning French, and they highlighted the originality of this methodology. One of these students even made a more explicit reference to the multiple benefits of cinema in terms of the linguistic and intercultural dimensions explained above: “I think that, besides being fun, it is a good way of learning French and the French culture.”

3.1.5. Question 5

In the fifth question, the participants were asked if they would make any changes to the cinema-based teaching lessons that were implemented so as to obtain a more holistic view on high school French students' perception on this methodology. Here, those students who had answered affirmatively were asked to specify the changes they would make.

Would you make any changes to the cinema-based French lessons you have attended during this study?

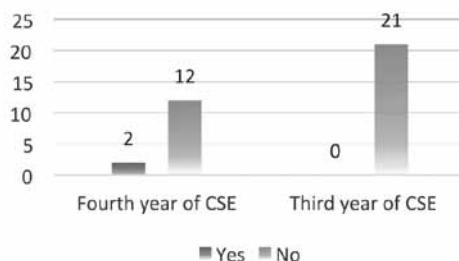


Figure 5. Graphic representation of the students' results (Question 5).

Only two out of thirty-five participants affirmed that they would make some changes to the lessons that had been implemented as part of the research, both in the group of the fourth year of CSE. One of these high school students stated that these sessions should be more dynamic, while another declared that they should last longer. The results obtained from this question are very relevant because, apart from confirming that the vast majority of participants were satisfied with this methodology, the comments made by those two learners who answered affirmatively to the question could be taken into consideration to improve the use of the cinema-based approach in the French classroom.

3.1.6. Question 6

Although the data gathered from the fourth question had already shown that the cinema-based approach stimulates high school French students, the participants were asked about it more explicitly in the sixth question as motivation is one of the most significant benefits of this medium for learners.

Has working on a film in the classroom motivated you to continue learning French?

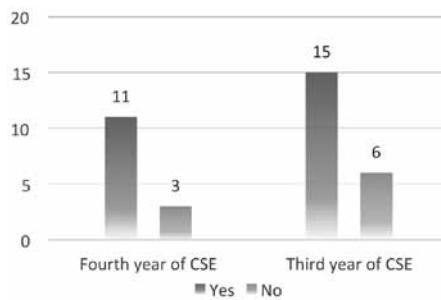


Figure 6. Graphic representation of the students' results (Question 6).

In the third year of CSE, six out of twenty-one participants stated that the didactic use of films in the classroom did not motivate them to learn French. As previously mentioned, this group of participants was extremely demotivated before the study, and many of them even declared that they did not like the French language itself. Even though six students continued to show a negative attitude towards the learning of French as a second language, fifteen participants answered affirmatively to the question and, therefore, they appeared to be more motivated after the study. Regarding the fourth year of CSE, only three participants answered negatively to the question. Still, one of them claimed that the reason why working on a French film in the classroom had not stimulated him/her was because s/he did not like the language itself, like some students in the other group. In total, twenty-six out of thirty-five participants affirmed that the didactic use of films in the French classroom had motivated them to study French.

3.1.7. Question 7

The seventh question was aimed at determining the efficiency of this methodology regarding high school French learners' sociocultural competence, which was another potential benefit of cinema which has been discussed at the outset of this paper

Have you learnt anything about the French culture during the research?

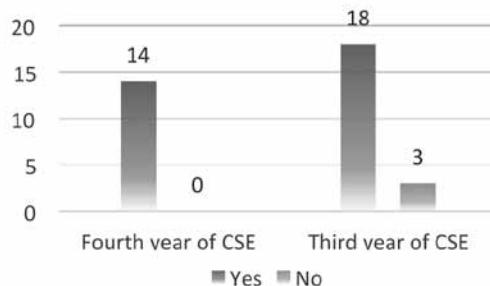


Figure 7. Graphic representation of the students' results (Question 7).

Three participants in the third year of CSE answered negatively to this question, claiming that they had not learnt anything about the French culture during the research. However, in the fourth year of CSE, all the participants answered affirmatively, declaring that they had been able to better understand the French culture thanks to the cinema-based sessions they had attended. The different results obtained from the two groups of participants are justifiable because distinct types of films were used in each classroom. *Indigènes* (2006), played in the fourth year of CSE, depicts more historical and cultural issues about the French society than *Le Petit Nicolas* (2009) and *Sur Le Chemin De L'École* (2013), both played in the third year of CSE. Even so, thirty-two out of thirty-five participants confirmed that they had learnt something about the French culture through the didactic exploitation of French films.

3.1.8. Question 8

The last question is focused on the participants' acquisition of linguistic knowledge, which is an essential aspect when learning a foreign language.

Have you learnt French during the cinema-based lessons?

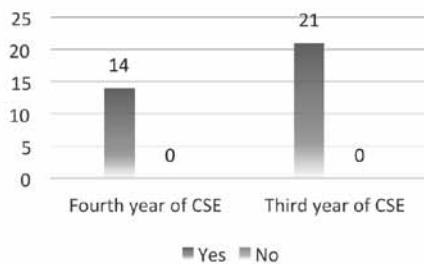


Figure 8. Graphic representation of the students' results (Question 8).

As can be seen in Figure 8, the affirmative answer was unanimous. All the participants who took part in this study asserted that they had been able to enhance their French language skills and that they had learnt some grammatical and/or lexical content during the cinema-based sessions they attended.

3.2. Hypotheses

3.2.1. High school French learners have a positive view on the didactic use of cinema

In light of the results obtained from the questionnaire, the students who participated in this study support the hypothesis that a) high school French learners have a positive view on the didactic use of cinema as their answers reflect several statements by Appetito (2019), Herron et al. (2002), and Pegrum et al. (2005).

In line with Appetito's claim (2019), the results obtained have revealed that for the students participating in this study, at least, the seventh art plays a key role in their daily

life because, as stated by Herron et al. (2002) and Pegrum et al. (2005), most of them have affirmed that watching films is one of their preferred leisure activities and that they do it quite often. Hence, in the case of these learners, the pedagogical exploitation of cinema could allow high school teachers to connect the teaching of French as a foreign language with their personal interests, one of the recommendations made by the Council of Europe to improve FLT at high school (Stern & Weinrib, 1977).

Herron et al. (2002) and Pegrum et al. (2005) have also indicated that students are willing to work on films in the classroom. As expected, then, the participants expressed a remarkably positive attitude towards the didactic use of the seventh art for FLT. Firstly, all of them claimed that they had enjoyed from the teaching unit that was implemented during the study. In fact, some of them even highlighted the most satisfactory features of the cinema-based approach. They asserted that cinema is an original and fun resource, and that it is a good manner of enhancing their linguistic and sociocultural competences. Moreover, when asked about whether or not they would make any changes to the lessons they attended during the research, only two students answered affirmatively to this question, which shows that the participants were generally satisfied with this methodology.

It must also be noted that, based on the results obtained, the cinema-based approach was regarded as a completely new teaching method by most participants. Only ten students had already watched films in the French classroom before the research, which could suggest that cinema is hardly used as a didactic tool for FLT, as argued by several scholars (Kanelloupolou et al., 2019; Kerrita, 2017; Pegrum et al., 2005). In addition, it is necessary to remark the fact that most participants knew the same French films before the research, *Le Fabuleux Destin d'Amélie Poulain* (2001) and *Les Choristes* (2004), which they had watched in the classroom. This shows that their French teachers continue to work on the same films instead of updating cinema-based tasks to their students' current experience. Therefore, the data gathered from the third question of the questionnaire confirm multiple researchers' affirmation that, when exploited, films are improperly used in the French classroom (Arey, 1993; Herrero, 2016; Giunta, 1989; Kerrita, 2017; Michalczek, 1976; Pegrum et al., 2005; Rousse, 2006; Rouxel-Cubberly, 2014).

3.2.2. The cinema-based approach provides secondary school French students with multiple linguistic and pedagogical advantages

Similarly, the hypothesis that b) the cinema based-approach provides secondary school French students with multiple linguistic and pedagogical benefits has been supported since the data gathered from the participants' answers mirror the currently available findings on this matter (Appetito, 2019; Bairstow & Lavau, 2017; Grubba, 2020; Karadag, 2009; Mencová, 2016; Rousse, 2006; Scanlan, 1998).

For a start, the results obtained indicate that this methodology helped the high school French students who participated in this study to develop their linguistic competence. During the cinema-based didactic unit, students were provided with several opportunities to enhance their listening skills when watching the trailers and the selected fragments from the different movies, which they understood easily thanks to visual cues, as Becker and Sturm claim (2017). Also, as stated by Neto and Sousa (2019) and Scanlan (1998), the participants were able to practise their reading skills when exploring the trailer script. Likewise, several

cinema-based tasks these learners did such as debates and essay writing on selected scenes from the movies allowed them to enhance their speaking and writing skills, as proposed by Appetito (2019), Markey (1976), and Scanlan (1988). Furthermore, the participants reported that they had learnt new grammatical structures (French prepositions and the future tenses) as well as new lexical items. This may be because, through the films used, they received a significant amount of authentic L2 input filled with a varied range of lexical content, which facilitates understanding and memorization, as asserted by Arey (1993), Kanellopoulou (2019), Karadag (2009), Piwowar (in Mencová, 2016), and Rousse (2006). In fact, as expected, all the participants confirmed that they had developed their language skills and that they had improved their knowledge of French grammar and vocabulary during the research.

In addition, as held by the experts in the field, the data gathered have shown that cinema has been a highly motivating pedagogical tool for the high school French learners participating in this research both because it forms part of their daily lives and because it contributed to create a friendlier learning environment. As discussed before, the results obtained in question two revealed that cinema played a key role in the participants' leisure experience. In addition, in question six, twenty-six out of thirty-five participants stated that these lessons had encouraged them to learn the language, confirming, therefore, Appetito's (2019), Karadag's (2009), and Tamarkin's (in Scanlan 1988) claim that cinema is a stimulating didactic resource because students are interested in it. Moreover, since the group of participants in the third year of CSE was extremely demotivated before the study, two of the three cinema-based sessions were addressed to them and a comedy film (*Le Petit Nicolas*) was used in the classroom with the aim of stimulating them. As Karadag (2009) and Shade (1996) argue, the mixture of cinema and humour has a positive impact on students' motivation, and this would appear to be borne out in this study because fifteen out of twenty-one participants in this group expressed a more positive attitude towards the learning of French at the end of the research. Thus, these data would suggest that cinema is a particularly motivating resource which can help high school French teachers to create stimulating lessons, as argued by Maury (2012).

Lastly, another benefit of the cinema-based approach for FLT which has been found among the participants in this study is the learners' enhancement of their sociocultural competence. Throughout the films which were projected, the participants came into contact with multiple features of the French culture such as French colonialism and urbanism, as declared by Herrero (2016), Michalczyk (1976), Misařová (2013), Rouxel-Cubberly (2014), and Scanlan (1988). Additionally, the learners were asked to complete several cinema-based tasks so as to further elicit intercultural reflection: a cultural debate and a written description of a French city. As expected, thirty-two out of thirty-five participants stated that working on French films had helped them to better understand the French culture, as asserted by Grubba (2020), Herron et al. (2002), and Scanlan (1988).

4. CONCLUSIONS

In short, the results which have been obtained show that participants in this particular study have a very positive view on the cinema-based approach as they find it enjoyable and effective, and, also, that this methodology is highly beneficial for these students because it

is motivating and it helps them to enhance their linguistic competence and develop their intercultural awareness. Nonetheless, further research is needed in order to shed more light on the use of the cinema-based approach in the high school French classroom. Firstly, studies with a larger sample size are needed in order to obtain more statistically reliable and generalizable results on the didactic efficiency of this method. Also, longitudinal studies should be conducted to test the long-term impact of the cinema-based approach on the participants' language learning process. And, last but not least, it is advisable to examine every benefit the didactic exploitation of films has for high school French learners more thoroughly, especially, linguistic advantages such as the improvement of reading and writing skills and grammar learning, which have been explored to a lesser degree by the experts in the field so far.

5. REFERENCES

- Abenoja, Z., & DeCoursey, M. (2019). Using drama activities to teach beginner's French to Chinese students at a tertiary institution in Hong Kong: an exploratory case study. *Studies in Second Language Learning and Teaching*, 9(4), 711-736. <https://doi.org/10.14746/ssllt.2019.9.4.7>.
- Abreu, O. (2016). Ansiedad general y ansiedad específica a la lectura en estudiantes de alemán como lengua extranjera | General and specific anxiety about reading in students of German as a foreign language. *Legenda*, 20(23), 134-160.
- Appetito, P. (2019). Le cinéma comme média culturel et éducatif dans l'enseignement-apprentissage des langues étrangères | Cinema as a cultural and educational medium in the teaching-learning of foreign languages. *Studia Universitatis Babes-Bolyai-Philologia*, 3, 239-251.
- Arey, M. (1993). French films: pre-texts for teaching syntax. *Foreign Language Annals*, 26(2), 252-264. <https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1944-9720.1993.tb01173.x>
- Bairstow, D., & Lavaur, J. (2017). Sous-titrage, compréhension de films et acquisition de vocabulaire | Subtitling, comprehension of films and acquisition of vocabulary. *Psychologie Française*, 62(3), 249-261. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.psfr.2015.05.001>
- Becker, S., & Sturm, J. (2017). Effects of audiovisual media on L2 listening comprehension: a preliminary study in French. *Calico Journal*, 34(2), 147-177. <https://doi.org/10.1558/cj.26754>
- Carr, W. (1999). Fear of teaching French: challenges faced by generalist teachers. *The Canadian Modern Language Review*, 56(1), 155-179. <https://doi.org/10.3138/cmlr.56.1.155>
- Cervera, T., & Núñez-Delgado, P. (2018). Incidencia de la animación a la lectura en la mejora de la competencia escrita: Una investigación con alumnado inmigrante | Incidence of encouraging reading in the improvement of the written competence: a study with immigrant students. *Porta Linguarum: Revista Internacional de Didáctica de las Lenguas Extranjeras*, 30, 177-191.
- Champoux, J. (1999). Film as a teaching resource. *Journal of Management Inquiry*, 8(2), 240-251.
- Giunta, S. (1989). Pédagogie de l'exploitation des documents vidéo dans l'enseignement du français langue étrangère | Pedagogy of the use of video materials in the teaching of French as a foreign language. *Enseignement du Français au Japon*, 17, 18-23. https://doi.org/10.24495/efj.17.0_18
- Grubba, L. (2020). Cinema, human rights and development: the cinema as a pedagogical practice. *CINEJ Cinema Journal*, 8(1), 87-123. <https://doi.org/10.5195/cinej.2020.238>
- Herrero, C. (2016). The film in Language Teaching Association (FILTA): a multilingual community of practice. *Elt Journal*, 70(2), 190-199. <https://doi.org/10.1093/elt/ccv080>

- Herron, C., Dubreil, S., Corrie, C., & Cole, S. P. (2002). A classroom investigation: can video improve intermediate-level French language students' ability to learn about a foreign culture? *The Modern Language Journal*, 86(1), 36-53. <https://doi.org/10.1111/1540-4781.00135>
- Jovanović, I. (2017). Profession of a teacher of French as a foreign language in Montenegro: attitude to education and difficulties of the profession. *Porta Linguarum: Revista Internacional de Didáctica de las Lenguas Extranjeras*, 28, 111-125.
- Kaiser, M. (2014). Film as a source material in advanced foreign language classes. *L2 Journal*, 6(1), 1-13. <https://doi.org/10.5070/L26119239>
- Kanellopoulou, C., Kermanidis, K., & Giannakoulopoulos, A. (2019). The dual-coding and multi-media learning theories: film subtitles as a vocabulary teaching tool. *Education Sciences*, 9(3), 1-13. <https://doi.org/10.3390/educsci9030210>
- Karadag, C. (2009). L'exploitation des films français dans l'enseignement des compétences orales en FLE | The use of French films for teaching oral skills in FLE. *Eğitim Fakültesi Dergisi*, 37, 122-128.
- Kerrita, A. (2017). La didactique de l'art cinématographique en classe de français langue étrangère: enjeux et perspectives | The didactics of the cinematographic art in the French as a foreign language classroom: challenges and perspectives. *Francisola: Revue Indonésienne de la Langue et la Littérature Françaises*, 2(1), 58-69. <https://doi.org/10.17509/francisola.v2i1.7527>
- Markey, W. (1976). The use of film in French language and literature courses. *The French Review*, 49(5), 730-735.
- Maury, C. (2012). L'intégration du cinéma hollywoodien en classe de langue: réflexions sur quelques points de convergence disciplinaires | The integration of Hollywood cinema in the language classroom: reflections on some disciplinary points of convergence. *Recherche et Pratiques Pédagogiques en Langues de Spécialité. Cahiers de l'Apliut*, 31(2), 26-43. <https://doi.org/10.4000/apliut.2661>
- Mencová, K. (2016). *Film et le développement de la compétence interculturelle dans l'enseignement du FLE* | *Film and the development of the intercultural competence in the teaching of French as a foreign language* [Unpublished master's thesis]. Masaryk University, Brno, Czech Republic.
- Michalczyk, J. (1976). The teaching of French civilization through film on the University level. *The French Review*, 50(2), 227-235.
- Misařová, M. (2013). *L'exploitation des documents vidéo dans l'enseignement du FLE* | *The use of video materials in the teaching of French as a foreign language* [Unpublished master's thesis]. Masaryk University, Brno, Czech Republic.
- Molina-García, M., & Rúa, J. (2017). Las dinámicas culturales, comunicativas e interculturales en el aula de español lengua extranjera: estudio de caso | Cultural, communicative and intercultural dynamics in the Spanish as a foreign language classroom: a case study. *Porta Linguarum: Revista Internacional de Didáctica de las Lenguas Extranjeras*, 27, 185-196.
- Neto, H., & Sousa, V. (2019). Encounter among languages? Analysis of the pedagogical appropriation of films in the project "o cinema vai à escola", according to the teacher of Portuguese language. *Dialogia*, 32, 210-221. <https://doi.org/10.5585/dialogia.N32.10473>
- Pastor, MDG., & Miller, R. (2019). Disfemia y ansiedad en el aprendizaje de inglés como lengua extranjera | Stuttering and anxiety in English as a foreign language learning. *Revista Española de Discapacidad*, 7(1), 87-109. <https://doi.org/10.5569/2340-5104.07.01.05>

- Pegrum, M., Hartley, L., & Wechtler, V. (2005). Contemporary cinema in language learning: from linguistic input to intercultural insight. *The Language Learning Journal*, 32(1), 55-62. <https://doi.org/10.1080/09571730585200191>
- Pereira, N., & Pinheiro-Mariz, J. (2018). L'adaptation filmique comme levier pour la compréhension de la lecture littéraire en situation de Français langue étrangère | Film adaptation as a lever for understanding literary reading in a context of French as a foreign language. *Synergies Brésil*, 13, 81-131.
- Rousse, M. (2006). La France à travers les films: compte-rendu d'une expérience pédagogique | France through films: report on a pedagogical experience. *The Journal of Nagasaki University of Foreign Studies*, 10, 371-382.
- Rouxel-Cubberly, N. (2014). The film trailer project: French films as textbooks. *The French Review*, 88(1), 117-133.
- Scanlan, T. (1988). Teaching French language and culture with French feature films on video-cassettes. *Journal of Educational Techniques and Technologies*, 55-63.
- Schulz, R. (1990). Bridging the gap between teaching and learning: a critical look at foreign language textbooks. In S. Magnan (Ed.), *Challenges in the 1990s for college foreign language programs* (pp. 167-182). Heinle/American Association of University Supervisors & Coordinators.
- Shade, R. (1996). *License to laugh: humour in the classroom*. Teacher Ideas Press.
- Stern, H., & Weinrib, A. (1977). Foreign languages for younger children: trends and assessment. *Language Teaching*, 10(1), 5-25. <https://doi.org/10.1017/S0261444800003232>

6. APPENDICES

6.1. Appendix 1

CINEMA-BASED DIDACTIC UNIT

First session

Group: 4 th year of CSE	
Film: <i>Indigènes</i> (2006)	
Sequencing of activities	<p>Benefits of the cinema based-approach reflected</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Introduction of the film's plot by the teacher. Trailer viewing in French. Second trailer viewing in French. This time, the script is given to the students for better comprehension. Oral discussion on the trailer. Grammar explanation of the expression “chez nous” by using a short fragment from the movie. Grammar activity to practice French prepositions. Cultural debate on African soldiers' support to France during the Second World War (1939-1945) after watching another fragment from the movie which depicts such issue.

Second session

Group: 3 rd year of CSE	
Film: <i>Le Petit Nicolas</i> (2009)	
<p>Sequencing of activities</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Introduction of the film's plot by the teacher. • Trailer viewing in French. • Second trailer viewing in French. This time, the script is given to the students for better comprehension. • Oral discussion on the trailer. • Viewing of a fragment in which the film's main character is talking about the future. • Writing about students' imagined future life in a French city. • Once they have finished writing, each student reads the essay aloud. 	<p>Benefits of the cinema based-approach reflected</p> <p>Development of listening, reading, speaking, and writing skills.</p> <p>Grammar learning (the future tenses).</p> <p>Motivation.</p> <p>Cultural awareness.</p>

Third session

Group: 3 rd year of CSE	
Film: <i>Sur Le Chemin De L'école</i> (2013)	
<p>Sequencing of activities</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Introduction of the film's plot by the teacher. • Trailer viewing in French. • Second trailer viewing in French. This time, the script is given to the students for better comprehension. • Oral discussion on the trailer. • Viewing of several fragments from the film. • Group writing of a short story in French. Each member of the group has to choose one word from the fragments they have watched and include it in the writing. • Peer correction of the writings. 	<p>Benefits of the cinema based-approach reflected</p> <p>Development of listening, reading, speaking, and writing skills.</p> <p>Vocabulary acquisition.</p> <p>Motivation.</p> <p>Cultural awareness as the film portrays multiple foreign communities.</p>

6.2. Appendix 2

QUESTIONNAIRE
(This questionnaire is anonymous)

Group:

Please, answer the following questions.

1. Is it the first time that you learn French by means of films in the high school classroom?

Yes:

No:

Additional comments: _____

2. Do you often watch films at home or at the cinema?

Yes:

No:

In case of an affirmative answer, how often? _____

3. Did you know any French film before taking part in this research?

Yes:

No:

Which one(s)? _____

4. Did you like the cinema-based French lessons you have attended during this study?

Yes:

No:

Additional comments: _____

5. Would you make any changes to the cinema-based French lessons you have attended during this study?

Yes:

No:

In case of an affirmative answer, which changes would you make? _____

6. Has working on a film in the classroom motivated you to continue learning French?

Yes:

No:

Additional comments: _____

7. Have you learnt anything about the French culture during the research?

Yes:

No:

Additional comments: _____

8. Have you learnt French during the cinema-based lessons?

Yes:

No:

Additional comments: _____

