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Literature as an “Affective Magnet”: Defining, Engaging and Investigating Emotions in a (Russian) Language-Literature Classroom

SOFYA YUNUSOVA

To evoke in oneself a feeling which one has experienced and, having evoked it in oneself, then by means of movements, lines, colors, sounds, or forms expressed in words, so to transmit that feeling that others may experience the same feeling - this is the activity of art.

(Tolstoy, 1925, p. 173)

1. Introduction

The mobilization of emotions is a distinctive feature and intrinsic part of literary reading. Yet it is only very recently that this side of literature reception has attracted the attention of reading researchers. Reading research, focusing for decades on “cold cognition,” has remained silent with regards to “the affective and aesthetic processes that without doubt constitute a significant part of the reading act” (Jacobs, 2015, pp. 135, 137). A similar state of affairs has characterized the field of literature in foreign-language education, including Russian foreign language (RFL) teaching. While the educational potential of literary texts in terms of engaging learners’ emotions has been foregrounded in some RFL studies, such as those by Kostin et al. (2017), Kulibina (2015b), and Miller (2016), the field has a relatively poor research base for discussing the nature of these affective responses and ways to systematically promote them in a language-literature classroom. To address this lack, this study first conceptualizes the different types of emotions that are arguably involved in foreign-language (FL) literary reading, and then formulates a set of pedagogical principles to foster their emergence in a language-literature classroom. The study describes a real-life class session

1 Emotions in this article are defined as affective responses of readers to literary texts. These include such general states as enjoyment, frustration, boredom, satisfaction, sense of accomplishment, and the more specific responses to narrative events and formal features of a literary text that are described in Section 3.
developed following these principles and conducted with volunteer Russian language students at an Australian university, and it presents the results of that intervention. The final part of the article discusses the implications of the study for both the development of classroom activities and research data collection.

2. Background

Literature has held a privileged place in RFL didactics since the early 19th century (Miloslavskaya, 2012) and continues to attract considerable scholarly and pedagogical attention today, despite the predominance of more “functional” models of learning. Some important publications on the methods of working with literary texts in RFL classrooms of the last twenty years include Blech (2007), Comer (2008; 2016), Keefe (2004), Reyfman (2014) and Rosengrant (2000), while analogous studies in the field of Russian second language (RSL) instruction comprise Avlova (2005), Balandina (2007), Filimonova (2004), Iatsenko (2018), Kulibina (2015a; 2015b), Potëmkina (2015), Taktashova et al. (2020), Tolstukhina (2015), among others. While each of these studies or pedagogical editions of literary texts advances an effective model for working with literary texts in an RFL/RSL classroom, most of existing proposals tend to concentrate more on the cognitive processing of the text rather than on the affective. This is evidenced by the focus on reading comprehension scaffolding and language-building exercises (including post-reading lexical and grammar drills) at the expense of classroom discussions, and the predominance of comprehension questions over interpretative ones. While it is clear that such pedagogical choices are, to a great extent, driven by the FL learners’ limited language proficiency as well as by the time constraints of a FL classroom, it is also true that the scarce attention to the affective dimension of literary reading does not allow teachers or students to fully capitalize on its didactic potential. The relatively few studies in the didactics of Russian and other more commonly taught European languages that have attempted to foreground the affective dimension have mainly developed under the influence of reader-response criticism, and within what has been defined as the experiential approach to the use of literature in FL education.²

² Within this perspective, a literary text is viewed as intrinsically more open and multi-layered compared to other types of texts and therefore has the potential to engage learners’ imaginations and emotions (Olsbu, 2014).
In one of the earliest studies that applied the reader-response framework to working with literary texts in a FL classroom, Davis (1989) developed a lesson plan for an experiential reading of a short story in French. Davis convincingly argued that by presenting the text in short segments and engaging students in a dynamic text-questioning activity, it was possible to both aid comprehension and draw learners into the text emotionally. The teacher’s role was defined by Davis as that of a “mediating reader” who encourages students to produce their own meanings of the text, drawing, on the one hand, on the instructions contained in it and, on the other, on their personal life experiences. More recent proposals based on the reader-response framework in the EFL context can be found in Carlisle (2000), Kim (2004), Liaw (2001), and Pattison and Redlich (2020).

In the RFL/RSL field, the most prominent method within the experiential approach remains Kulibina (2015b). Kulibina identifies two levels of literary text processing, когнитивный (cognitive) and психопоэтический (psycho-poetic), and holds that non-native readers of literature require assistance at both levels of processing. At the cognitive level, these readers need guidance in decoding the literal and contextual meanings of key linguistic units of the text, while at the psycho-poetic level they need to be assisted in constructing personal representations of these key linguistic units in the form of mental images. Kulibina persistently argues that a literary text should not only be understood, but also emotionally experienced by a non-native reader, which can be achieved by reflecting on the meanings of key linguistic units. Kulibina specifies that while in the case of poetic texts all words should be considered as key word-images as each of them carries a “maximal aesthetic load,” in prose texts key word-images should be selected for analysis and discussion by the instructor (p. 73).

In sum, all the above-mentioned studies have proposed valuable ways to foster non-native readers’ emotional engagement with literature. However, none of them have looked more closely at the different forms this affective response can take. Reading-induced emotions in these and

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3 Kulibina (2015b) acknowledges that this division is somewhat artificial but is necessary as it represents the structure of the reader’s activity more precisely and thus allows it to be modelled by means of questions and tasks (p. 69).

4 “Художественный текст должен переживаться читателем, а не просто пониматься” (Kulibina, 2015b, p. 73).
analogous studies have simply been defined in general terms such as enjoyment, emotional participation, pleasure of reading, and personal engagement with the text. Arguably, a more comprehensive and nuanced theory of emotions in reading literature in an FL would benefit the field from both theoretical and pedagogical perspectives.

3. Affective processes in literary reading

In reflecting on the interrelation between cognitive and emotional aspects in reading comprehension, Kneepkens and Zwaan (1994) claimed that the textual information that gives rise to emotions and interest is processed more rapidly and easily since it requires fewer cognitive resources. These two scholars also advanced a useful taxonomy of emotions in literary reading. The first group of emotions, fiction emotions (F-emotions), are engendered by the events in the fictional world: they relate to the contents of the story, its characters and the course of events. In contrast, artefact-emotions (A-emotions) are stimulated by the aesthetic qualities of the text. Kneepkens and Zwaan also distinguished between F-(a)-emotions (a standing for altercentric), related to the characters and situation described in the story, and F-(e)-emotions (e standing for egocentric), directed to the self. However, they stressed that, in practice, “there is no strict separation between both types of F-emotions [and] there will be a continuous interaction between F-emotions focused on the other and on the self during reading” (p. 132).

An alternate oft-quoted taxonomy of emotions in literary reading was proposed by Miall and Kuiken (2002), who defined these feelings at four levels. The first level includes evaluative feelings such as enjoyment, pleasure, frustration, or satisfaction. The second level is represented by narrative feelings “toward specific aspects of the fictional event sequence, such as empathy with a character or resonance with the mood of a setting” (p. 223), equivalent to F-emotions in Kneepkens and Zwaan. The third level of feelings are aesthetic feelings which arise “in response to the formal (generic, narrative or stylistic) components of a text, such as being struck by an apt metaphor” (Miall & Kuiken, 2002, p. 223). These correspond to A-emotions in Kneepkens and Zwaan’s classification. Narrative feelings include empathy, sympathy, identification, and a general absorption into the story world, while aesthetic feelings include surprise, admiration, and appreciation. Finally, the fourth level refers to self-modifying feelings.
that “restructure the reader’s understanding of the textual narrative and, simultaneously, the reader’s sense of self” (Miall & Kuiken, 2002, p. 223). Miall and Kuiken claim that this fourth level of feelings is similar to Aristotle’s concept of catharsis and is distinctive to literary reading. However, they remark that these feelings are mobilized “only among certain readers – and among them only some of the time” (p. 229).

Many of the above-mentioned claims about the nature of emotions in literary reading have recently been empirically verified within the growing field of the empirical study of literature. For example, Hakemulder (2004), Koopman (2016), Miall (2008), Miall and Kuiken (1994), and van Peer et al. (2007), among others, have looked at how formal features of literary texts such as foregrounding can trigger the emergence of emotions in readers. The term foregrounding (orig. Czech aktualizace) was coined by Mukařovský (1964) and stands for “a range of stylistic variations that occur [...] whether at the phonetic level (for example, alliteration, rhyme), the grammatical level (for example, inversion, ellipsis), or the semantic level (for example, metaphor, irony)” (Miall & Kuiken, 1994b, p. 390). Foregrounding thus makes a linguistic utterance stand out from the surrounding linguistic context (Leech & Short, 2007). Widely present and exploited in many other discourses such as advertisements, nursery rhymes, proverbs, and ordinary conversation, foregrounding is considered to be one of the distinctive features of literature.

Empirical research has demonstrated that foregrounding affects both the cognitive and the emotional side of reading. These textual elements are normally processed more slowly and effortfully, and are generally described by readers as striking, aesthetically pleasing, and rewarding, thus indicating the mobilization of A-emotions (Hakemulder, 2004; Miall & Kuiken, 1994; van Peer et al., 2007). The effects of foregrounding on the rise of F-emotions and in particular on the feelings of empathy have been recently documented by Koopman (2016).

Other studies on the affective processes in literary reading, conducted within the new interdisciplinary field of neurocognitive poetics, further support both the key role of affect in this type of reading and the taxonomies of emotions described above. For example, Jacobs (2015) distinguishes between foreground and background information processing in literary reading. The background of a literary text refers to the familiar linguistic structures it contains, as well as to “the repertoire of familiar
literary patterns and recurrent literary themes and allusions to familiar social and historical contexts” (p. 147). In Iser’s (1974) terms, this is the primary code of a text, against whose backdrop the secondary code (foregrounding) can emerge. Jacobs (2015) further specifies that different texts present a different mixture of back- and foreground elements, as can be easily understood by comparing a novel by Stephen King with one by James Joyce. Jacobs’s model holds that:

Background elements are implicitly processed mainly by the left hemisphere (LH) reading network, evoke non-aesthetic (fiction) feelings and are characterised by fluent reading (for example, high word per minute (wpm) rates) […]. In turn, foreground elements are explicitly processed involving more right hemisphere (RH) networks, produce aesthetic feelings, [and] a slower reading rate […]. (p. 147)

According to Jacobs, background reading facilitates immersive feelings (transportation, absorption), while foreground reading produces aesthetic ones.

4. Affective processes in FL literary reading
This discussion of the affective processes in literary reading raises the question of how this conceptualization relates to reading literature in a foreign language. Although learners’ emotional response to literature at lower levels of FL proficiency (below CEFR B2) might be limited by their restricted FL knowledge, recent studies have demonstrated that the emotional response of students at higher levels is comparable to that of native readers. For example, Hsu et al. (2015) and Kim (2004) have found that Upper-Intermediate and Advanced FL learners do experience a wide range of emotions when reading literary texts. Similarly, Hanauer (2001), and Chesnokova and van Peer (2016) supplied evidence for the effects of foregrounding on Advanced EFL learners when reading poetry. In short, these research studies suggest that the emotional response to literature, while being weaker and less differentiated in the case of FL readers, is nevertheless similar for both native and FL readers who have advanced expertise. It is thus deemed possible to extend the taxonomy of emotions discussed above to readers with fluent FL reading skills.
An additional point to consider in the case of FL literary reading, however, is the contribution of *achievement* emotions. Achievement emotions are “emotions tied directly to achievement activities or achievement outcomes” in learning contexts (Pekrun, 2006, p. 15) and are classified according to three dimensions: valence (positive vs negative), focus (activity vs outcome), and activation (activating vs deactivating). While it is not the goal of this study to analyze the various achievement emotions in FL reading, it is evident that this type of emotion must be considered when defining emotions in a language-literature classroom. For example, FL readers who see themselves capable of understanding such notoriously demanding and prestigious writings as literary texts are likely to experience positive activating achievement emotions such as joy and satisfaction, whereas comprehension breakdowns may lead to the rise of negative emotions such as frustration. The taxonomy of emotions in FL literary reading therefore looks as follows:

1. General, evaluative emotions towards the text
2. Fiction (or narrative) emotions (F-emotions)
   a. general absorption emotions
   b. altercentric emotions (F-(a)-emotions)
   c. egocentric emotions (F(e)-emotions)
3. Artefact (or aesthetic) emotions (A-emotions)
4. Self-modifying emotions
5. Achievement emotions

The question that still needs to be addressed for the purposes of the current study is how this advanced taxonomy applies to working with literary texts in FL classrooms, and at different levels of FL proficiency. Pedagogical practice shows that literary texts are usually introduced in FL classrooms in the form of excerpts, whose reduced
length might impair the rise of such F-emotions as transportation and absorption. Moreover, being the “nonintended readers” of literary texts written in their target language (Kramsch, 1985), FL learners, especially at lower levels of FL proficiency, often struggle with accessing what has been defined by Jacobs as the background of a literary text, which further impinges on the rise of F-emotions. At the same time, non-fluent FL readers of literature have difficulty also in decoding and emotionally responding to the foreground of the text, which may lead to reduced A-emotions. It seems, therefore, unclear whether literary emotions as defined in the present article can be realistically promoted in a FL language-literature classroom and by what means. In what follows, I reflect on this problem, and formulate several theory-driven pedagogical principles that are aimed at promoting the above-described emotions in a language-literature classroom.

5. Engaging emotions in a language-literature classroom: pedagogical principles

Although much currently remains unknown about the role of emotions in discourse processing including the processing of written texts (Bohn-Gettler & Kaakinen, 2022), a growing number of empirical studies (Bohn-Gettler, 2019; Jacobson et al., 2022; Mason et al., 2018; Mensink, 2022) have documented the interrelation and inseparability of cognition and emotion in the act of reading. In the field of L2/FL reading, Bernhardt’s compensatory model (2011) drew attention to the unexplained variance in L2 reading performance, which was found to predict up to 50% of the latter and was associated by Bernhardt with such factors as comprehension strategies, engagement, content and domain knowledge, motivation, and interest. While an exhaustive list of these factors remains unknown and Bernhardt does not explicitly refer to emotions in her model, the inclusion of such reading performance predictors as engagement, motivation, and interest acknowledges the contribution of “hot” affective processes to L2/FL reading comprehension. At the same time, as described in the previous section, literary texts have been found to be particularly conducive to emotional responses. It follows then that by systematically fostering student emotional engagement, language educators not only promote the essence of literary reading but also capitalize on the potential of emotions to aid reading comprehension.
The first way to foster the affective dimension of reading in a language-literature classroom consists in carefully assessing the emotional potential of the target literary text. Up until now, very few studies in the RFL field have drawn attention to a text’s emotional potential as a key criterion for its selection.\(^5\) I contend that the taxonomy of emotions in FL literary reading advanced above can represent a valid pedagogical instrument for assessing the suitability of a text from this perspective. What the language instructor needs to do in this respect is to carefully analyze the structure, the language, and the content of the text, to identify all elements that may be conducive to the five types of emotions defined in the taxonomy. While it is clear that, given the uniqueness of each reader’s life experience and personality, it would be impossible to predict all the various individual responses to a selected text, such an analysis is crucial for deciding on the suitability of a text in a given didactic context. Some specific advice on how to conduct such an analysis is provided in the following section.

A further way to foster affective processes in a language-literature classroom can be seen in the development of pre-reading, during-reading, and post-reading classroom activities targeted at fostering each type of emotions identified in the taxonomy. Due to the fundamental functions of emotions in reading and, in particular, literary reading, these activities should constitute an integrative part of a language-literature classroom, just like reading comprehension scaffolding aimed at supporting cognitive processing. Some specific ideas for these classroom activities are described in the following section.

The final recommendation consists in selecting literary texts that match not only students’ interests but also the language educator’s personal tastes. In this sense, it is difficult to disagree with Kulibina

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\(^5\) The criteria for literary text selection that are traditionally identified in RFL/RSL pedagogical literature are as follows (Avlova, 2005): художественно-эстетическая значимость [artistic-aesthetic value]; культурно-образовательная ценность [cultural informativeness]; воспитательная, образовательная и познавательная ценность [educational and informational value]; доступность языковой формы на определенном этапе изучения языка [linguistic accessibility of the text at the given stage of language learning]; доступность содержательной формы на определенном этапе изучения языка [thematic and conceptual accessibility at the given stage of language learning]; соответствие с тематикой программных требований [correlation with curricular requirements in terms of themes and topics] (p. 113).
(2015b), who specifies that language instructors should opt for those texts that they enjoy reading themselves (p. 86), an argument corroborated by abundant research on the transmission of emotions, in particular, teacher enthusiasm, in learning situations. It is thus plausible that the language educator’s enthusiasm for a selected text can contribute to the rise of both evaluative and achievement emotions in readers.

In what follows, I describe and present the results of a Russian language-literature class session that was developed with these pedagogical principles in mind. The goal of this session was to demonstrate the proposed pedagogical approach through the example of one literary text, and collect some empirical data on its functioning.

5.1. Selecting the text
The class session described below was developed for Intermediate learners of Russian with a language competence between B1 and B2 levels. The analysis of the suitability of the selected text for this student audience from the cognitive perspective was performed using the model for assessing the accessibility of a FL literary text proposed in Yunusova (2018).

The selected literary text was a short story by a contemporary Russian writer, Evgenii Grishkovets, Встреча с осенью [Meeting Autumn]. The emotional potential of this text was assessed, first of all, by considering the evaluative emotions it could engender in learners. The story is a first-person, autobiographical narration about the writer’s perception of autumn. At the beginning of the story, the narrator asks himself when he fell in love with autumn, and describes how the birth of his first child on 1 October made him realize the beauty of this season. In the following paragraphs, he describes what made him dislike Russian autumn before that, and then recounts several episodes from his personal life that had made his experience of autumn positive. He finally realizes that he has always loved this season, and asserts that his daughter will also fall in love with it in her time.

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6 See, for example, Frenzel et al. (2009), Keller et al. (2014), Kunter et al. (2011), and Patrick et al. (2000).
7 Due to the time constraints of a standard university lesson, a shortened version (806 out of 1311 words) of this short story was used. The shortening of the text did not involve any alterations to the original language of the work. The full text of the short story can be found on the writer’s personal website: https://odnovremenno.com/archives/714.
As this brief description suggests, the short story expresses a positive mood and touches on the theme of love, which is one of the five themes (together with death, danger, power, and romance) that normally evoke the interest of readers (Kneepkens & Zwaan, 1994). Moreover, the selected text is part of contemporary, present-day, Russian literature that has been found to attract RFL learners’ particular attention (Iatsenko, 2015, 2017; Kulibina, 2015b; Vorozhtsova & Ursegova, 2015). It was thus concluded that reading this text would be conducive to positive evaluative emotions such as enjoyment and pleasure in Russian learner-readers.

In assessing the potential of the selected text in mobilizing F-(a)-emotions, even the shortened version of the text was found to contain descriptions of several highly emotional events – the birth of a child, the discovery of the beauty of nature, and the recounting of childhood memories. Many of the events and feelings evoked in this short story were also of a universal nature and could be easily related to even by non-native readers. The story was thus thought likely to promote such F-(e)-emotions as empathy and self-identification. The autobiographical, first-person narrative form and consequent internal focalization of the story was also considered to further contribute to the rise of self-identification feelings in readers. As noted by van Peer and Chesnokova (2019), the technique of internal focalization “gives readers information about characters’ (sometimes also narrators’) thoughts and emotions. It is assumed in narratology that this will have an effect on the reader” (p. 4). Leech and Short (2007) argue that “the very exposure [...] to a character’s point of view, his thoughts, emotions, experience tends to establish an identification with that character, and an alignment with his value picture” (p. 221). The results of an experimental study by Hartung et al. (2016) confirmed that first-person narrations could lead to higher levels of transportation into the story world and mental imagery during reading.

Grishkovets’ text was also found to be conducive to A-emotions. In fact, while neither the original text nor its shortened version contained many instances of foregrounding, some of the expressive devices used by the writer, such as lexical repetitions and syntactic parallelisms, can arguably foster the rise of A-emotions. For example, in the first paragraph, the triplicate repetition of the stem \( \text{люб} \) [love] not only highlights the
key idea of the passage but also arguably aims at eliciting an affective response in reader. Moreover, the repetition of the word вопрос [question] and the question word когда [when] foregrounds the focus on time and the importance of the time of the year, thus facilitating the cognitive processing of this passage:

Когда я полюбил осень? Я задал себе этот вопрос недавно. Когда? И как только я себе его задал, я тут же понял, что люблю это время года. Без любви к осени не возник бы сам вопрос. Когда же это со мной случилось?

[When did I fall in love with autumn? I asked myself this question recently. When? And as soon as I asked it, I understood immediately that I love this time of the year. Without the love for autumn this question would not have arisen. When did it happen to me?]

A similar effect is produced by the anaphora “my daughter, my first child, my Natasha:”

Я полюбил осень в тот год, когда родилась моя дочь, мой первый ребёнок, моя Наташа.

[I fell in love with autumn the year when my daughter was born, my first child, my Natasha.]

Other passages conducive to A-emotions are contained in the aesthetically pleasing descriptions of the autumn landscapes and the narrator’s feelings around the birth of his child, among others. Lastly, while it was difficult to predict whether the text would elicit self-modifying feelings in readers, it was contended that, in reading and comprehending this text, an audience of Russian language learners would experience positive achievement emotions such as joy and a sense of accomplishment. It was also considered that the rich background of culture-specific information about the everyday life of Russians contained in the text would further contribute to the rise of both evaluative and achievement emotions in learners.
5.2. Designing classroom activities

As mentioned earlier, research in reading comprehension has recently drawn attention to the inextricable interrelation between cognition and emotion in the act of reading. It is thus assumed that any classroom activity aimed at the support of cognitive comprehension processes will have an impact on learner-readers’ emotional engagement with the text, and vice versa. For example, a well-designed pre-reading background knowledge development or activation task arguably promotes not only top-down comprehension processes during reading but also stimulates learners’ interest in the text. The latter, in its turn, may contribute to the rise of both evaluative and narrative emotions during reading.

The language-literature class session based on Meeting Autumn thus started with a background knowledge development activity that consisted in reading a short biographical note on the writer. This was followed by a content predicting activity. The third and fourth pre-reading activities were aimed at the activation of learners’ topic-specific background knowledge and pre-teaching key vocabulary, which consisted in word-picture matching. The goal of these activities was to increase the linguistic, cultural, and conceptual accessibility of the target text to learners and in this way expand its background (Jacobs, 2015). The researcher also promoted word retention by asking students to vocalize and rehearse the target words as much as possible. It was expected that these pre-reading activities would decrease the cognitive load of the text, thus facilitating the rise of F-emotions in readers.

In contrast, the fifth pre-reading activity was aimed at preparing learners for the reading by building up their emotional engagement with the topic of the text. The researcher had the students watch the famous picnic episode from the 1979 Soviet film Москва слезам не верим [Moscow Does Not Believe in Tears]. Students were encouraged to try to feel the atmosphere created in the video, and to identify as many previously discussed words as possible (жёлтые листья, шапкики на природе, хмарь, and грусть). Students were also asked to share their impressions about the image of Russian autumn conveyed in the video.

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8 The pre-reading activities are contained in Appendix 1.
in English. These pre-reading activities occupied approximately 25 minutes.  

As in the pre-reading phase, the during-reading phase engaged students in cognitive comprehension and affective activities that fed into each other. The first didactic intervention consisted in dividing the text into five parts at central narrative points. This was expected to promote both attention focusing and engagement. After having students read each part, the researcher made sure the meanings of the key words of the passage were clear to students by explicitly asking for their translation. The researcher also probed students’ understanding of potentially unfamiliar grammatical structures (particiles and gerunds) and syntactically dense sentences. Upon the completion of these cognitive comprehension activities, the researcher drew students’ attention to what she had identified as the central image of each passage and stimulated students’ response to it by asking pre-prepared questions. These questions were formulated in English and students were expected to answer them in English as well, although they sometimes attempted to answer in Russian. 

In order to assist students in perceiving the mood of the text, the researcher drew their attention to the descriptions of nature that reflected the narrator’s emotional states. In this regard, a helpful activity consisted in having students identify the colors used to describe autumn in different parts of the short story. Bright colors such as yellow, pale yellow, blue,

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9 Since the selected text is centered on a recurrent topos in Russian literature (autumn), pre-reading work on this text could also include the reading of several famous Russian poems about autumn (for example, Pushkin’s Unylaia para, Nekrasov’s Slavnaia osen’, and Pleshcheev’s Skuchnaia kartina). This activity could arguably further facilitate students’ cognitive and emotional engagement with the text and enrich their knowledge of the Russian culture. Moreover, given that autumn is a topos in Russian painting as well, works like Isaac Levitan’s Zolotaia osen’ might also be considered for viewing as part of pre- or post-reading activities.

10 For example, after reading the opening part of the text, students were asked to translate such words as случилось, родом, звёзды, разгадать, смысл and усили.

11 For example, the central image in the opening part of the text was identified in the sentence: “Столкна холодная, прозрачная сибирская ночь, а в небе виситолько звёзд, что хотелось смотреть на них бесконечно, пытаясь разгадать скрытый смысл соединений или увидеть рождение новой звезды.” The students’ emotional response was stimulated by the following two questions: What message do you think the author wanted to convey by means of this description? and What kind of feeling did he want to evoke in his readers?
and white, at the beginning of the text are in sharp contrast with grey and the “color of the sludge” in the middle part, only to re-emerge towards the end of the text in the image of festive and “juicy” gladioli. It was expected that drawing students’ attention to these revealing details of the text would stimulate their reflection on its overall message and composition, and encourage the development of narrative and evaluative emotions. To achieve the latter, the researcher also occasionally enriched the discussion with some culture-specific details by drawing on her native experience of Russian culture.\textsuperscript{12} Finally, students were asked to visualize the depicted scenes while reading and discussing the text. The performance at this task was not verified but students’ written recall protocols suggested that they did attempt to visualize some of the narrated scenes. While all of the above-described activities were conducted mostly in English, they enabled students to rehearse some new vocabulary from the text.

Targeted instructional interventions were also implemented to foster A-emotions. First, student attention was drawn to the instances of foregrounding, which, as described earlier, in the chosen text are mostly represented by lexical repetitions and syntactic parallelisms. The researcher had students reflect on the meanings the writer wished to convey by using these forms of foregrounding. Students also read some sentences from the text aloud to get a sense of the rhythm of Grishkovets’ prose. Students were also asked to reflect on the communicative effects of some colloquialisms (for example, \textit{высоченное}) or diminutives (квартирка, деньки, маечки).

Finally, special care throughout the class session was taken to promote positive achievement emotions in learners and to minimize negative ones. The researcher welcomed all students’ reactions to the text and tried to use the occasional comprehension breakdowns as an opportunity to analyze and reflect more deeply on the language of the text. The students were also regularly commended for their comprehension efforts and insights into the text. This phase of the class session lasted approximately 70 minutes.

\textsuperscript{12} For example, the researcher provided some background information on the day of September 1 (the start of school year in Russia traditionally celebrated by bringing flower bouquets to teachers) to facilitate students’ comprehension and emotional response to the description of bright and colorful gladioli – the source of the teacher’s admiration and of the narrator’s pride at the end of the story.
5.3. Collected data

Four volunteer Russian language students at an Australian university took part in the class session. The participants (two females, two males) had attended a minimum of five and a maximum of eight semesters of Russian language instruction. The language competence of all participants in the study fell within the Intermediate level of RFL proficiency.

After participating in the class session, students were asked to answer several comprehension questions, share the emotions that the text elicited in them in writing, and complete a lexical recall exercise and a written recall of the text. The analysis of the student answers to the cognitive questions showed that they understood the events described in the text very well, were able to recall words from it, and had developed their knowledge of the Russian culture. As for the responses to affective questions, these revealed that all participants enjoyed reading the text. All participants also reported that this short story evoked feelings in them. While two students mentioned feelings of nostalgia, revealing that the short story had evoked personal memories in them (the birth of a little sister; the arrival of a pet), another student mentioned that the main sensation experienced when reading this text was “cozy.” One student wrote that the story evoked the feeling of “the beauty of autumn and [feelings of] mystery and joy around the birth of a child.”

When asked whether they could relate to the story and/or identify with the narrator, one student mentioned that they could relate to the descriptions of this season because they were born and grew up in a Northern European country and their memories of autumn in that

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13 See Appendix 2 Post-reading questionnaires 1 and 2.

14 When prompted to provide translations for some of the key words of the text (Post-reading Questionnaire 2, Task 3), all participants were able to recall the forms and meanings of at least eight words out of ten. When asked to freely recall the words they learnt from the text (Task 1), learners were able to write down an average of seven words. While there were some misspellings (e.g., слакоть, грязь, скороводо), most of the words were recalled correctly.

15 The cultural gains mentioned by the students consisted mainly in having discovered some of the associations Russians have with autumn. One participant also mentioned that they were not aware that Russians enjoyed picnics just like Australians, and another pointed out that they did not know school in Russia started on September 1. Another learner was not familiar with the concept of sludge (слакоть) and was quite surprised to discover it. Three participants additionally mentioned having learnt that fathers were not allowed into maternity hospitals in Russia at that time.
country were “very similar to the ones Russians feel about autumn.” Another student mentioned that they could relate to this literary text “to the degree there are similarities to Australia” and personally enjoyed autumn too. One participant pointed out that while they could not relate to the narrator, they could relate to the idea that “sometimes one event can make someone love or hate something.” Another student confessed that although they had never experienced the birth of a child or autumn in Russia, they could relate to:

[T]he sense of wonder and awe that he experiences, and the way that emotion changes his outlook. That is to say, while reading the text, I felt as if I could relate to him, despite the fact that I have not experienced these things myself.

In addition to the altercentric and egocentric F-emotions described above, several participants also exhibited the rise of some A-emotions in reading this text. One participant recalled:

[T]he description of the yellow leaves covering the ground of the yard and the description of the sky that was only just a bit lighter than the colour of the sludge.

Two other students referred to the poetic descriptions of the autumn landscape in the initial parts of the text. The exact wording of one of these responses is as follows:

I liked the bit about the grounds being covered in leaves. I particularly liked the way the words were ordered so that the words ‘covered’ and ‘grounds’ surrounded the instrumental phrase about the leaves. I think this is quite elegant word order, and something we cannot control so easily in English.

In contrast, none of the students reported to have experienced self-modifying feelings while or after reading this short story. However, one pointed out that the reading induced reflection “on the way Russians perceive autumn.” The student also shared the following considerations:
This short story made me realize how little I know about Russian culture and the Russian way of life. It made me want to read more and understand more about everyday Russian life. The story paints an idyllic picture of everyday life, which is attractive, and makes me want to know more.

Overall, the collected data suggested that students’ emotional engagement with the target text was significant. Moreover, students expressed their general enthusiasm about the class session in which they took part and about what they were able to learn from it. One of the participants even chose this reading as the topic of their oral Russian language examination at the end of the semester.

6. Implications of the study
Although the goal of the above-described class session, its small scale, volunteer nature,¹⁶ and the absence of controlled research methods, do not allow the generalization of its findings, it seems that the designed didactic interventions were effective in assisting students to emotionally engage with the text. The collected data confirmed the hypotheses advanced earlier regarding both the emotional potential of the selected text and the design of classroom activities targeted at fostering an affective response in readers. The results of the study suggest that, despite the reduced length of the text, the presence of unfamiliar vocabulary and culture-specific references, and the learners’ limited reading skills, they were able to experience a range of literary emotions. This speaks to the possibility of promoting the appearance of different types of literary emotions in non-fluent readers of literature by means of targeted didactic interventions. As described earlier, these didactic interventions should concern both the selection of literary texts and the design of classroom activities. The systematic analysis of the emotional potential of a literary text should become part of the language educator’s classroom preparation routine, just like the traditional assessment of the text’s linguistic and cultural accessibility. This classroom preparation routine should also arguably include the development of specific activities for the pre-reading, during-

¹⁶ As pointed out by Blech (2007): “volunteer students are likely to be interested in the subject matter before volunteering, thereby not giving a clear representation of what role initial interest may play in the results” (p. 121).
reading, and post-reading phases, aimed at fostering different types of literary emotions.

Another implication of the study concerns the possible benefit of the proposed teaching approach for the retention of vocabulary and development of culture-specific knowledge. Despite the limitations described in the previous section, the collected data suggest the effectiveness of the developed class session not only in fostering emotional engagement with a literary text but also in promoting language learning. This finding draws attention to the close interrelation and essential inseparability of cognition and emotion in learning, and, more specifically, language learning, and calls for more research in this growing area.

More generally, the results of the study foreground the enormous didactic potential of literature in language education in terms of engaging student emotions. From this perspective and in Shanahan's (1997) words, literature represents a real "affective magnet" that can attract students to the exploration of a new language and culture. It seems that the particular focus on emotion in reading proposed in the present study can further assist language educators in developing effective and engaging activities for both language-literature and regular language lessons based on literary texts.

The final pedagogical implication of the study relates to the methods of research data collection. In the current study, data on learners' emotional engagement with the text was collected by means of a brief post-reading questionnaire that probed the emergence of narrative, aesthetic, and self-modifying emotions. While the collected data generally showed the suitability and efficacy of this method, it was also felt that a greater number of more nuanced questions would have increased the volume and quality of the collected data. Thus, the researcher expanded the questionnaire with additional questions within each group of emotions as identified in the taxonomy. The questionnaire draws on questionnaires of emotions in native literary reading that were proposed by Koopman (2015), and Miall and Kuiken (1995). Although tentative and preliminary in nature, the questionnaire represents an additional resource for FL pedagogy and FL literary reading research. It should be, however, noted that, given that each literary text will be unique both in its content and form, the wording and number of questions composing the questionnaire.

17 See Appendix 3.
will need to be adapted to accommodate the specificities of each text and teaching/research context.

In pedagogical practice, adapted versions of the Questionnaire can be used both to investigate students’ emotional engagement with the text in the post-reading phase, and as a guide for the development of during-reading questions. Moreover, some questions in the questionnaire can be used as prompts to stimulate student responses in reading logs and response journals based on literary texts.

7. Limitations of the study
In addition to the limitations of the study identified in the previous section, a further caveat should be made regarding the amenability of the proposed approach to different kinds of literary texts. While all literary texts are generally thought to be conducive to emotional responses, some genres appear to aim at and rely on this response more than others. This is the case, for instance, for some first-person memoirs like those by Grishkovets, lyric poetry, adventure and romance writings. It follows then that these texts are particularly appropriate for considering the affective responses in readers both as a major component of a reader’s “comprehension” of the text and as one of the means to achieve the latter. It is thus expected that the proposed pedagogical approach may be partly or fully resistant to those literary texts or text types that are less reliant on evoking an emotional response in readers. Examples of such texts may be found in parodistic and satiric literature, speculative fiction, and narrative poetry, among others.

8. Conclusion
The goal of this article has been to conceptualize affective processes in reading literature in a foreign language. The proposed taxonomy of emotions in FL literary reading has been generated on the basis of an extensive literature review that has brought together research coming from literary theory, the empirical study of literature, second-language reading and educational psychology. From a theoretical perspective, this taxonomy represents an attempt to conceptualize the different types of emotions involved in the complex act of reading literature in a foreign language, while the pedagogical function of this construct consists in providing language educators with a nuanced and pedagogically informative view of emotions in FL literary reading. The results of a small-scale exploratory study among
Russian FL learners at an Australian university suggest that the proposed taxonomy could assist language educators in both selecting literary texts and designing classroom activities to engage learners’ emotions, especially when it comes to first-person memoirs, lyric poetry, and other genres that rely on the reader’s emotional response in a particular way. A further contribution of the article consists in offering the field a preliminary Questionnaire of Emotions in FL Literary Reading that can serve both for data collection and for the development of classroom activities.

Acknowledgements
The author gratefully acknowledges the anonymous reviewers for their insightful comments and valuable suggestions.

Appendix 1. Pre-reading Activities

Pre-reading activity 1
You are about to read a short story by a popular living Russian writer and playwright, Evgenii Grishkovets [Евгений Валерьевич Гришковец]. Have you ever heard of this Russian author?

Evgenii Grishkovets was born in Kemerovo, Western Siberia, in 1967. In 1998 he moved to Kaliningrad. The same year he released his first play, “How I ate a dog”, which brought him national fame and was followed by other ten plays, three novels, two novellas [повести] and several short story collections. Grishkovets is also a stage director and an actor in his plays. In his works, Grishkovets uses plain colloquial Russian language and narrates about simple everyday life experiences many Russian readers can easily relate to.

Pre-reading activity 2
The short story you are about to read is entitled Встреча с осенью. This short story is autobiographical. Based on what you have learnt about Evgenii Grishkovets, your knowledge of the genre of autobiography and the title of the short story, what do you think this text might be about?

18 Images referred to in this material were provided for class use only and have not been included in the article for copyright reasons.
What do you think the writer will describe in this text? **Formulate several hypotheses in Russian.**

1. ____________________________________________________________.

2. ____________________________________________________________.

3. ____________________________________________________________.

4. ____________________________________________________________.

5. ____________________________________________________________.

**Pre-reading activity 3**
The representation of autumn and the emotional states linked to this season is a recurrent topos in Russian literature. By reading this text you will discover how many Russians experience and perceive autumn today. Try thinking of five most common associations with this season in your country/culture. List these words in Russian. Now let’s have a look at some of the most common associations Russians have with autumn.

**Pre-reading activity 4 (word-image matching)**

ОСЕНЬ В РОССИИ – АССОЦИАЦИИ

1 СЛАКОЙ  [Image 1]

2 ЖЁЛТЫЕ ЛИСТЬЯ  [Image 2]

3 ШАШЛЫКИ НА ПРИРОДЕ  [Image 3]

4 СОБИРАТЬ ГРИБЫ  [Image 4]

5 ПЕРВОЕ СЕНТЯБРЯ¹⁹  [Image 5]

¹⁹ This picture showed school children with flower bouquets during the traditional September 1 škol’naia lincek.
Pre-reading activity 5
To feel the atmosphere of Russian autumn, we will now watch a brief extract from a famous Russian film *Moscow does not believe in tears* [*Москва слезам не верит*, 1979]. While watching the video, try to identify some of the vocabulary discussed earlier.

[Image of the opening scene]

[After watching the extract]
Which words of those discussed earlier did you manage to identify? What image of autumn did the film-director want to convey? Going back to the portrayed scene in your mind, what colours do you visualize? Name them in Russian. Did this extract evoke any feelings in you? If yes, which? Try to name them in Russian.

Appendix 2. Post-reading Questions

Post-reading questionnaire 1
Please answer the following questions in English.

1. What important event in the narrator’s life happened in autumn?

2. What did the narrator see and understand on the day of that important event?

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20 This picture showed a person with visible flu symptoms.
21 This picture showed a person in a sad emotional state.
Appendix 3

Questionnaire of Emotions in Foreign-Language Literary Reading

Эмоции читателя при чтении художественной литературы на иностранном языке. Анкета

Table 1: Questionnaire of Emotions in FL Literary Reading

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Evaluative emotions</th>
<th>What kind of feeling do you have after reading this text?</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Оценочные эмоции</td>
<td>Какое чувство (какие чувства) вы испытываете после прочтения этого текста?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>How did this story make you feel?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Какие чувства у вас вызвала эта история?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Did you like this text? Why/why not?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Вам понравился этот текст? Почему / почему нет?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Did you enjoy reading this text? Why/why not?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Вам понравилось читать этот текст? Почему / почему нет?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Did this text evoke any feelings in you?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Вызвал ли этот текст у вас какие-либо эмоции?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>What feeling/s do/es best define your emotional state while reading the text (e.g., pleasure, frustration, satisfaction, enjoyment).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Что вы чувствовали, когда читали этот текст? (например, удовольствие, раздражение, удовлетворённость, радость)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Narrative/Fiction emotions</td>
<td>Did you, at any point in your reading, feel absorbed in the story?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>---------------------------</td>
<td>---------------------------------------------------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Повествовательные эмоции</td>
<td>Чувствовали ли вы в какой-либо момент чтения полное погружение в сюжет?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Did you feel involved in the events of the story?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Было ли у вас чувство вовлечённости в описываемые события?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Were you, at any point of your reading, able to see the narrated events vividly in front of you? When?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Могли ли вы видеть описываемые события перед глазами? Какие именно?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Did the story’s world, at any point of your reading, feel closer to you than the world around you?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Были ли вы так вовлечены в описываемые события, что в какой-то момент они казались вам ближе, чем мир вокруг вас?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>How would you define the general mood of the text?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Как бы вы описали общее настроение рассказа?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Did this text touch you in any way?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Тронул ли вас этот текст?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>What emotional responses do you have to the characters? To the setting?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Какие чувства у вас вызывает (вызывают) персонаж (персонажи) рассказ/описываемые события?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Question</td>
<td>Translation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
<td>----------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Did you sympathize with the character/any of the characters?</td>
<td>Вызвали ли персонаж (персонажи) у вас сочувствие?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Did you find the narrator an interesting person? Why?</td>
<td>Показался ли вам рассказчик интересным человеком? Почему?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>What did you feel towards the narrator?</td>
<td>Какие чувства у вас вызвал рассказчик?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Can you relate to the narrator’s/character’s feelings?</td>
<td>Близки ли вам чувства рассказчика/персонажа?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Can you relate to the events narrated in this text?</td>
<td>Близки ли вам события, описываемые в тексте?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Can you identify with the narrator/characters? If yes, in which way?</td>
<td>Близок ли вам рассказчик/кто-то из персонажей? Если да, то в каком плане?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Did you feel the same emotions as the narrator/character?</td>
<td>Доводилось ли вам испытывать эмоции рассказчика/персонажа?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Were you, at any point of the reading, able to imagine yourself in the narrator’s/character’s shoes?</td>
<td>Могли ли вы почувствовать себя на месте рассказчика/персонажа? В какой момент?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Aesthetic/Artefact emotions</td>
<td>Were there any descriptions or phrasings in this text that you found aesthetically pleasing/original/striking?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>----------------------------</td>
<td>----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Эстетические эмоции</td>
<td>Были ли в этом тексте какие-то фразы/выражения/описания, которые показались вам красивыми/оригинальными/яркими?</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Did you happen to re-read a particular phrasing that you found pleasing/original/striking?

Была ли в тексте какая-то фраза, которая показалась вам красивой/оригинальной/яркой и вы решили ее перечитать?

Did you, at any point of the text, slow down your reading to savor an aesthetically pleasing phrase or a beautifully put thought?

Останавливались ли вы при чтении текста - возможно, чтобы насладиться красивой фразой или красиво выраженной мыслью? Когда?

Can you remember any wordstring(s) or phrase(s) from the text that you found striking?

Запомнились ли вам какие-нибудь яркие фразы/выражения из текста?

How did you find the style of the text (e.g., interesting, beautiful, captivating, powerful, original)?

Как бы вы определили стиль текста? (например, интересный, захватывающий, запоминающийся, необычный)?
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Self-modifying emotions</th>
<th>Did this literary text make you reflect on any particular topic/issue?  Заставил ли вас этот текст задуматься о какой-то проблеме?</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Did this literary text change something in you?  Изменил ли этот текст что-то в вас?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Did this text help you to understand something new about the lives of people that differ from yours?  Помог ли вам этот текст понять что-то новое о жизни других людей?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Did this text give you insights into your own world?  Помог ли вам этот текст понять что-то новое о себе?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Did this text make you look at an event, fact, place, person or group of people with new eyes?  Заставил ли вас этот текст по-новому взглянуть на какое-то событие, факт, место, человека или группу людей?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Did this text evoke in you any new feelings towards a place, event, person or a group of people?  Заставил ли вас этот текст испытать новые эмоции по отношению к какому-то месту, событию, человеку или группе людей?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Did this literary text reveal something new to you about the human condition?  Узнали ли вы благодаря этому тексту что-то новое о жизни людей?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Do you continue to ponder this story after having finished reading it?  Продолжаете ли вы думать об этом тексте после прочтения?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Achievement emotions</td>
<td>What feelings did you experience after reading the text in Russian? – (e.g., sense of accomplishment, frustration, pride, joy, discouragement)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-----------------------</td>
<td>----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Какие чувства вы испытали после прочтения этого текста на русском языке (например, чувство удовлетворения, раздражение, гордость, радость, недовольство)?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>What feelings did you experience while reading it in Russian? – (e.g., anxiety, interest, joy, irritation, boredom)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Какие чувства Вы испытывали во время чтения этого текста на русском языке (например, тревога, интерес, радость, раздражение, скука)?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Was this text too difficult for you to enjoy it?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Был ли этот текст слишком сложен для вас и в результате вы не почувствовали удовольствия от чтения?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Did you learn something new about the Russian life, society and culture while reading this text?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Узнали ли вы из этого текста что-то новое о русской культуре, российском обществе и жизни в России?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Did you learn any new vocabulary while reading this text?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Узнали ли вы из этого текста какие-то новые слова?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Were you able to understand the story line?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Смогли ли вы понять сюжет рассказа?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Were you able to appreciate the language and style of the text?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Получили ли вы удовольствие от того, как написан этот текст?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Are you happy that you read this text in Russian?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Довольны ли вы тем, что прочли этот текст по-русски?</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
References


Literature as an “Affective Magnet”

SOFYA YUNUSOVA


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