

EFL Literary Teaching Approaches: Linguistic Orientations

التوجه اللساني في التدريس الأدبي للغة الإنجليزية كلغة أجنبية

Dr.Semmoud Abdellatif-Sersour Amina*

Abu Bekr Belkaid University of Tlemcen

lot.abisam@yahoo.co.uk

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Abstract :

Teaching literature in an EFL setting is a challenging task that entails both expertise and flexibility to help students attain a genuine engagement with the literary component of the English language. Through reading and responding to literary texts, the students are likely to become confident about expressing their own thoughts and feelings. Literature in fact places the students in an active interactional environment that, in turn, allows them to reach independency in making sense of its language. Within this course of thought and in an attempt to help students appreciate literature, the present paper seeks to suggest a theoretical framework to teaching literary texts. Such a framework is basically language-oriented. It aims at reinforcing the students' personal responses to literature and hence enhancing their independency in interpreting and appreciating it by exploring the richness of its language.

Key words: literature, texts, reading, learning, language.

الملخص:

يعدّ تدريس الأدب في إطار تعليم اللغة الإنجليزية لغير الناطقين بها مهمة صعبة تتطلب الخبرة والمرونة لمساعدة الطلاب على تحقيق مشاركة فعّالة مع العناصر الأدبية للغة الإنجليزية، ومن المرجح أن يصبح الطلاب واثقين من التعبير عن أفكارهم ومشاعرهم من خلال القراءة والاستجابة للنصوص الأدبية. في الواقع، يضع الأدب الطلاب في بيئة تفاعلية نشطة تسمح لهم بالوصول إلى الاستقلالية في فهم لغتهم، وفي هذا السياق، تسعى هذه الورقة البحثية إلى اقتراح إطار نظري لتدريس النصوص الأدبية، لمساعدة الطلاب على التدوّق الأدبي للنصوص وتقديرها، وإدراك قيمتها الأدبية ضمن إطار موجه أساساً نحو اللغة، كما تهدف أيضاً إلى تعزيز استجابات الطلاب الشخصية للأدب، وتمكينهم من تفسيره وتقديره من خلال التفاعل معه فكرياً وذوقياً لاستكشاف ثراء اللغوي.

* Semmoud Abdellatif /-Sersour Amina

Introduction

Recent studies in the literature field have shown how important it is to teach literature in foreign setting, which gain a major place in the English as a foreign language department. The teaching of literature linked to all aspects that will motivate the learner and raise his literary abilities, especially linguistic and cultural, as well as intellectual. It is considered as an authentic source rich in everything that is useful for teaching and learning process. Moreover, it goes without saying that literary studies help learners broaden their language repertoire which in turn enable them generate their critical thinking by being thought-provoking.

The field of ELT, teachers, and learners are exhibited to a number of difficulties while using literary texts in their teaching or learning. These difficulties include text selection, that is, the text needs to be picked that have a connection and interest to learners, and need to be appropriate to the level of the student comprehension.

In addition, shorter texts are suitable because maybe easier to use within class time rather than longer texts that provide extra details, as well passages should not be so culturally heavy that not take out learners understanding of meaning.

According to Povey (1972:187) reading literature familiarises students or learners with subtle vocabulary usage and new complex syntax and through this contribute to the extension of language usage and linguistic knowledge.

The word 'literature' is used fundamentally in two different meanings. First, it refers to any written material on a theme. Second, it is a word utilised to be added to the one of the education subject studies by learners or an institution of higher education, discipline; it is applied in its second sense in EFL. As McKay (1982:33) believes that in literary works settings, role relationships are predetermined and social context is taken into consideration, so it can be used for increasing the awareness of the students about language use. Additionally, Lazar (1993:34) says that literature can be used as a tool for creating opportunities for discussion, controversy, and critical thinking.

Hadaway, Vardell & Young (2002:34) propose three advantages of using literature. The first one is the contextualisation of language. Learners become familiar with the use of language in different situations when they read a piece of literature. Social and affective factors which are embedded in different formats of literature such as picture books, newspapers, and short stories are another benefit of literature. So literature can be suitable for students with different styles and takes into account individual differences. The third benefit refers to the natural and meaningful aspects of the language which is accomplished by illustrations and use of descriptive language in literature.

Literature in EFL Context

Then, if one must expand and analyse a literary passage, one must highly be competent in the language of the texts and conversely, if one must be eligible in language, one should be adequately exposed to the literature of the language in question.

Additionally, Collie and Slater (1994:03) show the implication of literature in the language classroom in order to supply valuable veritable material, promotes individual involvement and assistance share in to readers cultural as well as language richness.

In the context of literary utilities, Lazar (1993,pp15:19) provides five causes for utilising literature in EFL, including motivating materials, emboldening student language gaining, then

extending student language consciousness. After that, developing student expository abilities, subsequently, educating the whole person. As stated by Lazar (1993:24) posited that “Literature should be used with learner because it is an impulse stimulus for language acquisition” i.e. it is established in many syllabuses and the like of literature as a proper source of content for a course in a foreign language that gives motivational materials for language teaching.

As well as Carter & Long (1991:01) considered the study of literature as “a sine qua non for the truly educated person.” During the nineteenth century, the literature was used in language teaching. The Grammar Translation Method **1** was the predominant in language teaching and the most common technique was the translation of literary passages in the mother tongue. Literature is the central vehicle for teaching and learning language. Literary works give extra material on grammar practice, lexical learning, and translation (Liaw, 2001; cited in Khatib, Hossein and Rahimi 2012, 32). Within the grammar Translation Method, literature was the centric component.

The literary texts of a given language were read and interpreted, used as a model of good writing works and ‘clarification of the grammatical rules.’ This teaching method gave the greatest importance to the form which was the main centre rather than the content, during learning the rules of grammar and the lexical items as they manifested in the text. The literary was neglected as well the uninterested to the content. After this method fell in desertion, literary texts also went unremembered for teachers.

Since the decrease of Grammar Translation Method and the up growth of the structural approaches to language teaching, literature was reduced as a tool and it was unutilised in language classes, for the reason that it represented the old tradition. Evenly, in the time of CLT literature was ignored and dismissed from language syllabuses because in this method the focus lies in communication.

Literature was deemed either to the communicative task or to be a genuine model of language use. Even so, in the last decade or so the regard for literature as one as the extremely worthy language teaching purse available has renewed remarkably. One of the most effective figures in the scope of literature, Similarly, McKay (1982:530) claims that one of the most important contributions of using literature for language teaching purposes is that ‘literature presents language in discourse.’

Approaches to Teaching Literature

The integration of literature in EFL is a decision that has been taken by many scholars in which they can observe how literature can serve language teaching in terms of language input, cultural studies, and self-development through the appropriate use of it. Carter & Long (1991:2) have suggested three models to the teaching of literature that will be presented: the Language Model, the Cultural Model, and the Personal Growth Model. Savvidou (2004) which is the Integrated Approach has recommended another approach.

The Cultural Model

This model depicts the traditional approach to teaching literature. The use of this model requires students to interpret the social, historical and literary status of a particular text. As Langer (1991) cited in Tina Abdullah et al. (2007) claims that the teaching of literature is often considered ‘a way to in doctrine students in the cultural knowledge, good taste and high culture of society.’ The teaching of literature via this model not only exposes the universality of such thoughts and concepts, but promotes learners to grasp different cultures and ideologies in relevance to their own.

However, those researchers in literature teaching have rejected this model since not only does it tend to be teacher-centred, but there is little chance for expanded language work. For the same context Valdes (1986:137) cited by Plastina (2000) claims that

‘Literature is a medium to ‘transmit the culture of the people who speak the language in which it is written.’

The cultural model considers literature as a source verities or input and therefore, reading tends to be based on gaining information.

In this model, the teacher is a transmitter and holder of knowledge and information to the learners. I.e. this model is based on teacher-centeredness and there are little opportunities for language level developments.

The Language Model

The language model approach is considered as the most common for teaching literature in the EFL classroom. Carter and Long (1991) indicates to as the ‘Language-based approach.’ This common approach allows learners to access a passage in the systematic path in order to symbolise certain linguistic features. E.g. literal and figurative language, direct, indirect speech, such an approach inspires the repertoire of strategies to use in language teaching by providing the following: closure procedure, prediction exercises, disordered sentences, synopsis writing, inventive writing and role play that is included in EFL activities used by teachers to analyse literary texts in order to avail specific linguistic targets.

However, Carter and McRae (1996) depicted this model like taking a “reductive” approach to literature. These activities are unrelated from literary goals of the specific text in that they can be used for any text. There is a small correlation of the learner with the text other than for purely linguistic practice. Literature is used in a rather aimless and mechanistic path in order to provide for a chain of language activities designed by teachers.

Savidou’s Integrated Approach

The integrated approach is valuable to students. Langa and Yost (2007) affirmed that this methodology helps students make connections. Lucan (1981) further suggests that the integrated approach is student-centred for the reason that it empowers students to make connections, generalise, and transmit knowledge to a variety of problem-solving situations in the factual world. In addition, Adeyemi (2010) writes that integrated approach provides students with more comprehensive learning that is rich and motivating.

As a result, it makes the classroom atmosphere more enjoyable and thought provoking. Furthermore, Knowles and Smith explain that integrated approach to teaching literature “can facilitate collaborative learning, as well as help students, become autonomous problem solvers.” (2001;77)

Savidou (2004) also suggests that a literary text should be approached in three different ways: firstly, as a cultural object, secondly, as a way to approach linguistic analysis, and thirdly, as a method for personal growth. She then elaborates to terminate that an integrated approach is a potentially powerful pedagogic tool.

The Personal Growth Model

It is a model, which endeavours to ridge the cultural model and the language model through focusing on the special use of language in a text. As well as positioning it in a special cultural context. Learners can benefit from this model by expressing their feelings and opinions and create linkage between their own single and cultural expertise and what is expressed in the text Thus, undoubtedly, when the scope is narrowed to post colonial literature, this model indubitably make learners, no longer, sceptical and reticent about the colonial historicity of their country. The feelings they state holding compel them to quite understand what were the interest and intentions of colonisers in their country. A clear image

springs out from their critical understanding of postcolonial literature. In this respect, Maley and Duff (1994) further argue that 'Literature can make people respond personally to other people's way of seeing things and can engage both their intellect and their emotion.' This model helps learners develop knowledge of ideas and language content and formal schema by various subjects and themes. This model looks the opportunity for the students to link and reply to the themes and issues by making a connection to their personal lives. As result, learners' growth in terms of language, feelings and character development are stimulated. This task connects to theories of reading Goodman (1970) which assert the interaction of the reader with the text. As Cadarath Harris (1998:188) demonstrates that:

The text itself has not meaning, it only provides trend for the reader to structure meaning from the reader own experience. So, the learning occurs only when the readers are capable to interpret text and construct meaning on the basis of their single experience.

The three approaches to teaching literature have points of strengths and weaknesses and there is no denying of the benefits of each approach. What is needed is an approach that integrates all above-mentioned elements that literature is attainable to students and profitable for their linguistic enrichment as well as their prise de conscience towards their countries' issues.

Ultimately, it is broadly known that literature and language are closely interconnected. So literature is rooted in language and through literature, language gets the life. Language is the standard raw material within which literature is made. It is founded on this opinion that it is ordinarily said that "Literature is language in practice", is that is, language theories, notions and patterns are put into a function in the manufacturing of literary texts.

The representational language of literary passages engages and compels the learners and their emotions, likewise their cognitive ability. Literary works aid learners to exploit their creative thinking and increase their creativeness. In this area of interest, postcolonial literature come and imposes itself as the purveyor of thoughts, assumptions, attitudes and most of all the epistemological beliefs that learners acquire and hold in their minds and souls through the readings of postcolonial literary productions. They are as well yield learners to raise in their researches the issues of colonialisation, imperialism as well as issues of orientalism and identity.

A Suggested Linguistic Approach

The students in this approach (Glencoe 2001)² are tested on the literature, reading, and vocabulary skills they learned in Independent units. This test gives them the practice they need to succeed while providing an assessment of how they have met the unit objectives.

They read first by applying the strategy of foldables. These are three-dimensional interactive graphic organizers for taking notes and organizing their ideas. They are also fun, they fold paper, cut tabs, write, and manipulate what they have made in order to organize information; review skills, concepts, and strategies; and assess their learning.

- **Reading With Purpose.**

- Before they read: their unit Foldable will help them to focus on their purpose for reading by reminding them about the Questions of the literary text.
- During reading: their unit Foldable will help them to stay focused and engaged. They track key ideas and their thoughts about each selection and how it helps them answer the questions. It also encourages them to use higher level thinking skills in approaching text.
- After reading: their Foldable will help them to review their thoughts from their reading and to analyse, interpret, and evaluate various aspects of the questions. their Foldable notes also help them with their unit challenge. They also stimulate rich group discussions and inquiry. Become an active reader, track and reorganize information so that they can better understand the selection.

- **Reading Handbook**

We do not read a news article the way we read a novel. We read a news article mainly for information; then a novel's purpose is fun. To get the most out of our reading, we generally need to choose the right reading strategy to fit the reason we are reading. The handbook focuses on skills and strategies that can help the students understand what they read.

- **Identifying Words and Building Vocabulary**

Admittedly, when we come across a word we don't know as we read, we skip it over and keep reading. The essence is that If we are reading for fun or entertainment, we might do that. But if we are reading for information, an unfamiliar word may get in the way of our understanding. When that happens, the following strategies must be tried to figure out how to say the word and what it means. These strategies will help us better understand what we read. They will also help us increase the vocabulary we use in everyday speaking and reading.

- **Using Word Parts**

We can easily learn a word by looking closely at its building. By studying word parts the root or base word, prefixes, and suffixes we may discover more than just how to pronounce a word. We may also find clues to the word's meaning.

- **Roots and Base Words**

The main part of a word is called its root. When the root is a complete word, it may be called the base word. Many roots in English come from an old form of English called Anglo-Saxon. We probably know many of these roots already. For example, endearing and remarkable have the familiar words dear and mark as their roots. Other roots come from Greek and Latin.

- **Using Syntax**

Languages have rules and patterns for the way words are arranged in sentences. The way a sentence is organized is called the syntax of the sentence. If English is our first language, you have known this pattern since you started talking in sentences. If we are learning English now, we may find the syntax different from the patterns we know in our first language. In a simple sentence in English, someone or something (the subject) does something (the predicate or verb) to or with another person or thing (the object).

- **Using reference materials**

Dictionaries and other reference sources can help students learn new words• A dictionary gives the pronunciation and the meaning or meanings of a word. Some dictionaries also give other forms of words, their parts of speech, and synonyms. We might also find the historical background of a word, such as its Greek, Latin, or Anglo-Saxon origins.

- A glossary is a word list that appears at the end of a book or other written work. It includes only words that are in that work. Like dictionaries, glossaries have the pronunciation and definitions of words. However, the definitions in a glossary give just enough information to help you understand the words as they are used in that work.
- A thesaurus lists groups of words that have the same, or almost the same, meaning. Words with similar meanings are called synonyms. Seeing the synonyms of words can help the students build their vocabulary.

• Understanding Denotation and Connotation

Words can have two types of meaning. Denotation is the literal meaning, the meaning you find in dictionaries. Connotation is a meaning or feeling that people connect with the word. For example, you may say that flowers have a fragrance but that garbage has a stench. Both words mean “smell,” but fragrance has a pleasant connotation, while stench has a very unpleasant one. As you read, it is important to think about the connotation of a word to completely understand what a writer is saying. (Glencoe 2007)

Conclusion

The present paper praised the significance of teaching literature in the language classroom. Unquestionably, integrating literature in an EFL context entails the careful exploitation and the sensitive handling of the literary text so as to place the students in supportive environment that allows them to benefit from it linguistically, culturally and even motivationally. On this basis, the paper examined the recognized approaches to teaching literature and spotted their principles and pedagogical applications. Through this examination, the focus was centred on the language model, and therefore, an endeavour was made to suggest a teaching framework that reinforces the exploration of the linguistic aspects of the literary discourse. This model stems from the premise that the interface between language and literature is conducive to learning potentials for students at the different levels of language and literary studies.

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Notes:

1. Grammar Translation Method is an approach to teaching the language that was implemented during the fifties and early sixties. It had six characteristics

- Focuses on reading and writing
- Uses vocabulary words
- Uses the sentence as the basic unit of Teaching
- Adopts a deductive approach
- New terms are explained in the native language
- Emphasises accuracy.

2. Glencoe. Published by Mc Graw-Hill Inc.,US in 1 Jun.2001 in the English language.

"The two most engaging powers of an author are to make new things familiar and familiar things new" Samuel Johnson(1709-1784) " Glencoe Literature" 2002 also "makes new things familiar and familiar things new." Designed to meet the needs of today's classroom, " Glencoe Literature" has been developed with careful attention to instructional planning for teachers, strategic reading support, and universal access that meets the learning needs of all students.