

ISSN 1857-9965



ELTAM JOURNAL

No 3

9th ELTAM - IATEFL - TESOL INTERNATIONAL BIENNIAL CONFERENCE

**Re-imagining teaching:
Rejuvenating and transforming classroom practices**

14-16 October 2016

Struga, Republic of Macedonia

June, 2018

Editorial Board:

Dragana Stegić, IATEFL Slovenia

Nizama Muhamedagić, TETA Bosnia and Herzegovina

Zorka Radonjić, ELTAM Montenegro

Yannis Stergis, HYPHEN SA Greece

Helena Kryg, Adam Mickiewicz University, Poznan, Poland

Gordiana Gjorgova, ELTAM Macedonia

Editor-in-chief

Jovanka Jovanchevska

ELTAM Board member, Journal editor and National coordinator for secondary school competitions

Contents

Using literature texts in teaching English as a foreign language	5
Natka Jankova	5
Makedonka Madzirova	5
Developing durable language competences in the EFL classroom: Drawing on from the experiences in an Intercultural Communication course.....	13
Ivana Trajanoska	13
Gamification for inspiration.....	29
Biljana Temelkova	29
Teaching grammar the fun way	34
Zorica Trajkova	34
Who is in charge of your class?	40
Metaxeni Symeonidou.....	40
University Students with Disabilities and ELT	54
Silvana Neshkovska	54
Stela Bosilkovska	54
ELT education – are we up for the European ELT market?	68
Jovanka Jovanchevska.....	68
Songs in the English language classroom	75
Reneta Stoimenova.....	75

Great thanks to the editorial board and all the contributors. We are looking forward to our 2018 conference in Struga in October and hoping for your further contributions.

We hope we make that little difference...

Editor-in-chief

Using literature texts in teaching English as a foreign language

Natka Jankova, M.A. (PhD candidate)

Makedonka Madzirova, ELT

SOU “Nikola Karev”, Strumica

Abstract

Teaching English as a foreign language is a process whose aim is changeable from culture to culture and individual to individual. These problems made teachers to find and develop new methods and techniques in order to improve the teaching and learning process. There are various reasons for using literature in ELT. The first and essential one is that language in literature texts is taken as valuable source of authentic language to expand the language awareness. The second reason is that lessons which involve literature in teaching and learning provoke interaction, discussion, critical thinking and educate the persons' personality and it is motivating. Finally, there are disadvantages in using literature in ELT. Despite the enthusiasm of those who are in for using literature, there is still a point which claims that the use of literature is not always pleasurable for all the learners.

Key words: *ELT, literature, reading, authentic language, critical thinking*

Introduction

Teaching English as a foreign language is a process whose aim is changeable from culture to culture and individual to individual. These problems made teachers to find and develop new methods and techniques in order to improve the teaching and learning process. The role of literature in ELT varies depending on what theories and approaches have prevailed in language learning because since the 1880s this area attracted more interest among EFL teachers (Clandfield and Foord, 2006).

The Communicative language teaching method gives credit of the **authentic language** taken as language written by specialists for specialists (Jordan, 1997). Literature language is

deemed as authentic material. Most works of literature are not created for the primary purpose of teaching a language. Many authentic samples of language in real life contexts (i.e. travel timetables, city plans, forms, pamphlets, cartoons, advertisements, newspaper or magazine articles) are included within recently developed course materials. (Hişmanoğlu, 2005). The old-fashioned structure drills which have been widely used in ELT, make the process of learning so monotonous and even impossible in today's life conditions and the advancement of technology. Because teachers lacked other materials, they had to look for new tools and methods in order to make the lessons more entertaining. Now texts are produced by authors who live in the political and social world of their time, and we gain a better understanding of their works by taking these contexts into account. (Beard, 2001).

Realizing this fact, the new publishers try to remove the boring extracts from the books. However, the usage of literature texts cannot be very useful if only taken as tools to improve students' knowledge in the language. Other components are needed but literature should be an essential tool in teaching English as a foreign language. The goal of the language teacher is to help students understand and produce spoken and written texts (in the traditional sense of language products) and to cope with, mediate between or even enter into 'cultural texts' (if seen as social practices). (Corbett, 2003: 168).

1. Theoretical approaches of using literature in English language teaching

There are various reasons for using literature in ELT. The first and essential one is that language in literature texts is taken as a valuable source of authentic language and expands the language awareness. The second reason is that lessons which involve literature in teaching and learning provoke interaction, discussion, critical thinking and educate the persons' personality and this is motivating (Clandfield et.al., 2006). If language for ages has served three major aims: language for communication, language for artistic and cultural appreciation, and language for linguistic analysis (Kelly 1969: 396) and these aims varied in different periods in history in the XXc, the communicative ability of learners was taken as the most important one. In 1991 Ellis stated that the major objectives in ELT are linguistic, psychological, cognitive, social and cultural, thus by using literary texts in teaching all the objectives are covered.

The main theory on which the paper is based is *the theory of Stephen D. Krashen* who developed a second language acquisition theory. He distinguishes two concepts in language learning i.e. acquisition and learning, where acquisition is seen as the basic process involved in developing language proficiency. For him the unconscious development of the target language

system results because of the usage of the language for real communication. From here, learning would be related to the conscious representation of grammatical knowledge and non spontaneous processes. Thus, students who read literature books can acquire better communicative and linguistic competence. The research question of this paper will be whether the usage of literature texts in the English language teaching will improve students' knowledge in terms of vocabulary. The language in the literature books is considered as authentic. Many scholars such as McKay confirm that reading books improves students' vocabulary but only if the students are given clear instructions and guidance: reading literature, increases learners' awareness of language use since literary texts present language in discourse set in different social contexts (McKay 1986: 191). If you give them a task to read the book in order to retell it, they can easily find the plot online and will not achieve any results in terms of improving their vocabulary. That is the reason why clear guidance is really important. When reading literature texts, the reader is engaged with this passionate aspect of the text. Engagement is generally thought of as a key component of learning environment, especially learning English language. This engagement is created especially through conflict prevailing literary works. (Keshavarzi, 2012).

Furthermore, our aim would be to prove whether reading literature increases students' awareness of language use based on the *extensive reading* approach which is connected to reading a lot of books for entertainment and acquiring general understanding. Setting a theoretical/critical text or extract for students to study independently prior to a lecture or seminar devoted to it is valuable in that it gives the students the opportunity to see what they can do for themselves. Our suggestion would be that reading books should be obligatory component of any language teaching syllabus because it allows students not only to consolidate their previous knowledge of linguistic rules but also to get a clue of how the language is used in real-life situations and taken as such would be considered as authentic language. (Ellie, Chambers and Gregory, 2006).

2. Learning and improving vocabulary

Competent speakers of English language know the lexis or the vocabulary of a language even though the knowledge would vary in terms of learners' education and occupation. Giving instruction in teaching vocabulary is not an easy task. Sometimes, teachers are facing difficulties, because students are not willing to learn new words because they do not think it is necessary because of various reasons. According to Krashen, you have to "live in the country"

in order to achieve any real proficiency in a second language, and that the informal real world environment is always superior to the classroom, or formal environment, but it is also confirmed that classroom does help after all. (Krashen, 58: 1982). The case when one talks to a native speaker or a person with a proficiency level in English language, students deem that they are inferior to the situation and they cannot find the appropriate vocabulary. If the informal language is the language used for every day routines among close people, it is essential to provide the vocabulary for communication in social situations. If students are in a position of a real-life situation such as speaking to a native speaker they often feel insecure because they lack the native speaker vocabulary. However, this can be a very good reason for students to improve their vocabulary by reading different books where they will encounter formal and informal language the native speakers use on daily basis. If students get familiar with phrases and expressions that are more likely to be used by native speakers and the same ones are to be found in authentic books, they will feel more secure to speak the language for sure.

Literature texts are taken as authentic material, since they are written for native speakers; thus they offer cultural background, various ways of expressing emotions, vocabulary used in the time when the book was written and plenty of real life situations. Literary language can also meet the curiosity students might have in terms of meeting someone from a different culture, and answer different every day questions or how native speakers behave in their surrounding. Literature should be used in the classroom in order to raise students' cultural awareness and to increase their wish to meet and talk to native speakers.

1.1 What is literature?

Various definitions for literature can be found in books, dictionaries and papers. The Oxford dictionary gives the following definition “Written works, especially those considered of superior or lasting artistic merit”. This definition is essential because it describes literature as a way of art and merit. Literature is seen as the art-form of a language where words are its tools. As the painter uses paint, a musician uses instruments, a sculptor uses stone-and-chisel, a writer uses words. Even though there are many explanations of literature all of them lead to one conclusion that “literature is only literature if it is considered as art (Clandfield, et.al.).

Nowadays, many people believe that literature is not of huge importance and find a way to underestimate its worthiness. The today's society triggers the fact that students are probably more inclined towards computer science and those who are more passionate towards literature and other art forms will be destined to a life of low-paying jobs and unsatisfying careers. At

one point, at least in our surrounding, people started to think that literature is insignificant. However, for people who deal with languages, literature serves as a gateway to learning and understanding the world. However, there is still a hope that people will change their minds because it has become fashionable to read and talk about the recent best-sellers, which is promising.

1.1.1 Using literature in ELT and criteria for selecting materials

Using literary texts in the ELT is not just putting in practice a set of activities, memorizing situations, characters or understanding the main ideas of the author. If it is used as such it won't probably meet the needed results. The main reason to use literature in the ELT is to make the lessons interactive where students can improve their communicative skills and enhance their critical thinking abilities. Literature opens a new world to the students. It improves the critical abilities and encompasses every human dilemma, conflict and makes the students eager to uncover the plot more than a gap filling exercise. According to Duff and Maley, there are three main reasons for using literature: linguistic, methodological and motivational (1900:6) and these would be the criteria models for selecting literary materials in the English language classroom.

- Linguistic, because in reading literature the learners gain knowledge of different linguistic units such as irony, exposition, argument, narration, etc.
- Methodological, because when reading students can develop reading and comprehension and also become creative and imaginative. However, it is important for the teacher to choose the appropriate material for the learners
- Motivational, because most often students sometimes consider literary texts more interesting than the texts in their course-books and the reason for that lies in the outdated texts which do not catch the students' attention

2. The disadvantages of using literature in ELT

Although, there are many advantages discussed above, there are certain exclusions to the assertions made before. According to Sullivan, there are two problems connected to literature and its usage in language teaching (Sullivan, 1991):

a) Linguistic difficulty of the text is one of the major arguments against using literature in the language classes.

b) Learners may need a lot of background knowledge about English language and culture to interpret some texts.

Despite the enthusiasm of those who are in for using literature, there is still a point which claims that the use of literature is not always pleasurable for all the learners. Another criticism - it is also suggested that foreign language literature often fails to make any sense of progress, and rather than advances in skills or abilities it specifies items of knowledge (Brumfit, 1981).

There are other concerns connected to English language teaching and the usage of literature considered as authentic material:

- Problems with the grading of the grammar and vocabulary component
- Facing difficulties can make students think that the effort will be never worth
- The idiomatic language can be outdated
- Sometimes the literary texts are too high level
- Problems with cultural references in terms of comprehension

Conclusion

The main aim of this paper is to show that advantages are more than the disadvantages. Using literature in the classroom is a different approach in ELT and involves not only motivation but also pleasure for students and the teachers. Because literature is considered to hold high status in many cultures and countries, students can feel a real sense of achievement at understanding a piece of highly respected literature (Clandfield & Foord, 2006).

However, it has been argued whether literature texts and extensive reading should be obligatory part of the ELT curricula. There is no doubt that literary texts enable the students to acquire the language naturally by learning the input through authentic language. As stated above, it is important for a person who wants to become fluent language user to read longer, “live in the country” where the language is spoken, but also attend English language lessons, because it is confirmed that the classroom does help after all.

Finally, extensive reading is a needed component in the foreign language curricula although it is seen as long-term aim or vision of both the teacher's and school's policy in the country where you learn or teach. Even though it takes much time to find the needed resources and make students read extensively, it is a positive challenge for both students and teachers

because it has been proved that literature texts give a lot of possibilities for critical thinking, creativity and of course knowledge and better results in the target language.

References:

- Beard, A. (2001). Texts and contexts introducing literature and language study. London: Routledge.
- Brumfit, C. (1981). *Reading skills and the study of literature in a foreign language*.
- Clandfield, L. and Duncan F.(2006). "Teaching Materials: Using Literature in the EFL/ESL Classroom"
- Corbett, J. (2003). An intercultural approach to English language teaching. Clevedon, England: Multilingual Matters.
- Duff, A. & A. Maley.(1990). *Literature*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Ellie, Chambers & Marshall Gregory. (2006). Teaching and Learning English Literature (Teaching and Learning the Humanities Series)
- Ellis, Gail and John McRae. (1991) The Extensive Reading: Handbook for Secondary Teachers. Harmondsworth:Penguin Books,
- Hişmanoğlu, Murat. (2005). Teaching English Through Literature. Journal of Language and Linguistic Studies
- Kelly, Louis. G. (1969) 25 Centuries of Language Teaching. Rowley: Newbury House
- Keshavarzi, Abdollah, (2012). Use of literature in teaching English. Elsevier Ltd. Iran
- Krashen, S. D. (1982). Principles and practice in second language acquisition. Oxford: Pergamon.
- McKay, S. (1986). 'Literature in the ESL Classroom' in " Literature and Language Teaching, Oxford: Oxford University Press,
- O'Sullivan, Radhika. (1991). *Literature in the Language Classroom, The English Teacher Vol XX October*. ... In: 18TH Melita International Conference, June 11-13, 2009, Johor Bahru.
- R.R.Jordan, (1997). English for Academic Purposes: A guide and resource for teachers. Glasgow: Cambridge University Press. P.113-114

Bibliogprahy

- Beard, A. (2001). Texts and contexts introducing literature and language study. London: Routledge. Keshavarzi, Abdollah, (2012). Use of literature in teaching English. Elsevier Ltd. Iran
- BritLit: Using literature in EFL classrooms, (2009). e-book Published by the British Council
- Clandfield, L. and Duncan F.(2006). "Teaching Materials: Using Literature in the EFL/ESL Classroom"
- Dixon-Krauss, L. (2002). Using literature as a context for teaching vocabulary. Journal of Adolescent and Adult Literacy, 45(4), 310-318.

- Dymešová, P. (2006) The Use of Literary Texts in Primary Classes. Brno. Katedra Anglického Jazyka a literatury
- Ellie, Chambers & Marshall Gregory. (2006). Teaching and Learning English Literature (Teaching and Learning the Humanities Series)
- Harmer, Jeremy. (1991) The Practice of English Language Teaching. New Edition. Longman. New York
- Hişmanoğlu, Murat. (2005). Teaching English Through Literature. Journal of Language and Linguistic Studies
- Judy Willis-(2008) Teaching the Brain to Read_ Strategies for Improving Fluency, Vocabulary, and Comprehension-Association for Supervision & Curriculum Development
- Llach A. P. (2007) *Teaching language through literature: The waste land in the ESL classroom. Odissea. Universidad de la Rioja*
- McKay, S. (1986). 'Literature in the ESL Classroom' in "Literature and Language Teaching, Oxford: Oxford University Press,
- Peter Falvey, Peter Kennedy (2006). *Learning Language Through Literature: A Sourcebook for Teachers of English in Hong Kong*. Hong Kong University
- R.R.Jordan, (1997). English for Academic Purposes: A guide and resource for teachers. Glasgow: Cambridge University Press. P.113-114
- Walters, J. (2006). Methods of teaching inferring meaning from context. Regional Language Centre Journal, 37(2), 176-190.
- Kelly, Louis. G. (1969) 25 Centuries of Language Teaching. Rowley: Newbury House
- Ellis, Gail and John McRae. (1991) The Extensive Reading: Handbook for Secondary Teachers. Harmondsworth: Penguin Books