

To Use Literary Texts in ESL/EFL Classes or NOT

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Abstract

This paper looks at the positive and negative aspects of utilizing literature in an ESL class. The writers discuss that if any genre of literature is to be utilized effectively in the class, it should be precisely chosen and investigated precisely in a way which promotes a strong connection between the reader and the content. A particular example of how a literary content may be moved towards in order to encourage this kind of collaboration will be established as a conclusion.

Keywords: ESL/EFL Classes, Literary Stylistics, Language Learning & Literary Texts

Introduction

Does ESL curriculum require including literature? Nowadays with the present focus in ESL on meeting the specific scholastic and word related requirements of the learners, it is anything but difficult to see any regard for writing as superfluous. Is there a reason for incorporating literary texts in the educational modules?

We should first look at the basic contentions against utilizing literary texts. The most widely recognized ones could be what follows. To start with, since one of our primary objectives as ESL/EFL lecturers, is to instruct the grammar and literature, because of its structural multifaceted nature and its special use of language. Second, the investigation of literary texts will contribute nothing to help our learners meet their occupational and scholarly objectives. Third, literature regularly mirrors a specific social point of view; thus, in terms of concept, it might be very uneasy for learners. These arguments unquestionably should be addressed if we decide whether to use literary texts.

Unmistakably, we as a whole offer the target of advancing our learners' attention to the structure of the dialect. Be that as it may, there are Widdowson (1978) brings up two levels of phonetic information: the level of use and the level of utilization. As indicated by his definition, utilization includes a learning of etymological principles, though utilize involves knowing how to utilize these tenets for powerful correspondence. Can a scholarly content add to a learning of possibly one?

The most recent view of scholars of literature is to expect that literature can give a premise to expanding language use. A great number of these writings concentrate on the specific linguistic focuses that are remarkable in the content (see, for instance, Fassler and Lay 1979). Moreover, vocabulary development is managed by consideration regarding word structures and basic expressions. Povey (1972:187), in outlining the points of utilizing literature in ESL classes, contends that "literature will increase all language skills because literature will extend linguistic knowledge by giving evidence of extensive and subtle vocabulary usage, and complex and exact syntax."

While literary texts have generally been utilized to show language use, once in a while it has been utilized to create language use. However the benefit of utilizing literature for this reason for existing is that literary texts present language in discourse in which the parameters of the setting and part relationship are characterized. Language that shows a specific enlist or vernacular is inserted inside a social setting, and subsequently, there is a reason for deciding why a specific

frame is utilized. In that capacity, literature is perfect for building up a familiarity with language use.

A moment regular contention against utilizing literature is that it will do nothing towards advancing the students' scholarly as well as word related objectives. As a matter of first importance, recollect that one need not expect that literature be concentrated to the avoidance of different sorts of writings. Subsequently, it requires not be an issue of either literature or composition. Or maybe, the inquiry is one of regardless of whether the investigation of literary texts can in any capacity add to academic or occupational objectives. Surely, in so far as literature can encourage a general increment in reading skill, it will add to these objectives. An assessment of reading skill lays on a comprehension of what is associated with the reading procedure. Widdowson (74) and others consider reading "not as a response to a content but rather as communication amongst author and reader intervened through the content. This collaboration, it appears to happen on two levels: "linguistic and conceptual". Finally, reading requires the capacity to cooperate with a content by unraveling the language and grasping the ideas exhibited. Besides, these two levels frequently connect. Johnson (1981), in looking at the impacts of the phonetic many-sided quality and the social foundation of a content on the perusing perception of Iranian ESL understudies, found that the connection between these factors is perplexing; in a few occasions recognition with the content made it simpler for students to manage complex syntactic structures, however this commonality likewise brought about understudies' going past the content in deciphering it. What is basic in choosing content is to analyze it for its two difficulties: linguistic and conceptual. While decipherability equations give some list of the previous, lamentably we have little to help us in managing the one mentioned last.

The point of view of reading as collaboration presupposes, or course, that a reader will connect with a specific content. It is here that the motivational factors associated with reading end up very basic. As Gaies (1979:48) highlights, since the reading procedure is the communication of a reader and a content, we remain in measuring up to need of more research on the entire of feeling, attitudinal and experiential factors which would separate individual or groups of students as far as their readiness and capacity to disentangle composed contribution to a current language." For a few students, literature, may give the emotional, attitudinal and experiential components which will propel them to read. All things considered, literary writings can help in the development of reading capability and along these lines add to a student's scholastic and occupational goals.

Literature Review

Many scholars like McKay, Chen, Chnara Khdir and Mariwan Hasan, Bahra Rashid and Mariwan Hasan, Hişmanoğlu, Willis, Ernst-Slavit and Khatib, Rezaei and Derakhshan believe that the advantage of use of literary texts in ESL/EFL classes outweighs its disadvantages. Thus, such a view encouraged us to believe in the positive role that literature plays in ESL/EFL classes.

Although, there are some criticism and problems about using literary texts in ESL classrooms, such as; the difficulty of reading these kinds of texts for students, advantages of utilizing them is irrefutable. Some of the plus points that can arise from using a piece of literature are:

Firstly, motivating the learners to be more tolerant for cross-cultural differences and encouraging them to avoid extremism or fanaticism. Since, most of the literary texts are imaginative - and in this imagination world all discussions are valuable and, there are no rights or wrongs and assuming anything is allowed – they will motivate the willingness of the learner to tolerate and accept the others different cultural viewpoints.

Secondly, increasing the creativity of the independent learners is another benefit of using literary texts in ESL classes. These texts familiarize the students with the available assumptions or facts in literature and this will lead to transferring the imagination power and energy from the texts to the learners.

Thirdly, through reading literary texts ESL learners' linguistic knowledge will be improved.

Finally, students' reading proficiency will be promoted. The reason is that, most of the students to some extent enjoy reading and interacting with literary texts.

Choosing Literary Texts

McKay also believes language teachers and educators should give appropriate consideration to select the most appropriate literary works. There are, of course, lots of authentic texts written in the target language which are not suitable for the level of our students at both of the culture and linguistic levels. To overcome the problem of difficulty of the original texts in terms of reading comprehension, scholars and language teachers try to simplify and re-write the texts using basic and simple vocabularies, e.g., the simplified version of *Hard Times* by Shakespeare for non-native speakers. However, ESL learners get some benefits from simplified texts, but its disadvantages should not be ignored. Some of these mins points could be: a. Simplification makes the information of the texts weaker and less effective. b. Grammar structure simplification of the text will lead to non-readability and ultimately reducing the cohesion. c. Adding extra words to the text or omitting some others from the text for simplification purpose will also increase little or partial development of reading skills (1982).

Therefore, instead of thinking of simplified texts for ESL students, it is better to focus on some other substitutes. For instance, the teachers can use those texts that are fairly easy and readable. This can be measured according to complexity of vocabulary and syntactic structure utilized in the text. Another available alternative is to choose the literary texts that are stylistically not complicated. Most of these types of texts are written for young readers. The theme of such texts is appropriate with the age and cognitive development of young adults. This kind of literature is also relevant to the background knowledge of the culture and language of the learners and they are familiar enough with the theme of the text.

The Advantages of the Use of Literary Texts in ESL/EFL Classes

It can be a source of contexts that are meaningful which includes a reflective variety of words, discourses and prose. It appeals to mind and improves inventiveness and through which cultural consciousness can be developed. Moreover, it can reassure critical thinking.

An unfathomably vital preferred standpoint to the utilization of literary texts in language teaching is in the domain of its authenticity. Classroom exercises in the domain of ESL are portrayed by endeavors at significant and genuine correspondence, at all levels. Thus, there is incredible need to make lessons that utilizing authentic materials these literary texts that are composed in genuine language; delivered for the local speakers and initially planned without showing purposes at the top of the priority list. Given this paradigm, literature would fit in a perfect world, since it is intrinsically legitimate. Two abstract types especially emerge in this regard: the novel and drama. The last gives discussions, articulations of feelings, phrases utilized as a part of typical discourse and articulations that are contextualized. Likewise, books give expressive written work, helping the ESL student utilize creative ability in language learning (Roudrigues 2014).

Also, Roudrigues is in the view that the utilization of literature additionally gives a level of inspiration to the student, given their legitimacy and the important settings they provide. Once more, the engagement of a language's literature with its own particular culture encourages foreign students to build up a social and intercultural mindfulness. This specific factor is the fate of expanded hugeness in the time in which we live, a time where globalization is inescapable. In any case, it should be noticed that literature likewise helps address another issue that of communicating all around shared needs and wants, and not simply needs that are specific to an individual or culture. It needs no elaboration that literature manages ideas that are endemic to the human condition – nature, business, connections, accounts, family and nationality. Since literature epitomizes such all-inclusive ideas the language student is normally ready to relate to it, in this manner making its acceptance simple (2014).

Real Classroom Time and Literature

Dealing with literary texts in the classroom and making an appropriate relationship between the readers and such texts is another significant issue after selecting texts. Decision making about using the efferent or aesthetic type depends mainly on the classroom approach used by ESL teachers. According to Rosenblatt (1978), if the purpose of presenting a set of extracts is to ask the learners to carry off the meaning and gaining some information, then the classroom approach's main focus is on the efferent reading. On the other hand, where the classroom approach is relevant to the students' experience and the aim of the presenting a piece of literature is the learners' enjoyment, then using aesthetic reading is of primary importance (McKay 1982).

Consequently, it is quite obvious that not only the use of literary texts in EFL classes has a key role in making students learn English in an easy way, but also it makes them aware of the culture of the English language and idiomatic expressions. Thus, through knowing the culture of the target language, which is English, students will learn the language easily and in a better way because such a knowledge will familiarize students with the English language to a good extent.

Conclusion

Literature always becomes an inseparable part of the EFL/ESL curriculum. For many students, literature can provide a key to motivating them to read in English. For all students, literature is an ideal vehicle for illustrating language use and for introducing cultural assumptions. Our success in using literature, certainly, greatly depends upon a selection of texts which will not be overly difficult on either a linguistic or conceptual level. Ultimately, however, if we wish to promote truly aesthetic reading, it is essential that literature be approached not differently, but in a manner which establishes a personal and aesthetic interaction of a reader and a text.

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