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LITERATURE IN THE EFL/ESL CLASSROOM: CONSENSUS AND CONTROVERSY

Marzieh Bagherkazemi
Allameh Tabataba'I University, Tehran, Islamic Republic of Iran
m_b43@yahoo.com

Minoo Alemi
Sharif University of Technology, Tehran, Islamic Republic of Iran
alemi@sharif.ir

Abstract
This paper provides a review of ideas and research regarding the role of literature in the EFL/ESL classroom. Firstly, it sketches a brief history of literature's association with and dissociation from first and second language programs from the 18th century on. Secondly, it elaborates on the bone of contention among foreign language educators in terms of whether or not literature has the capacity to enrich and enhance foreign language teaching and learning practices. To this end, the postulated pros and cons of using literature in the EFL/ESL classroom are presented. Finally, theoretical and empirical research is drawn upon to depict some of the ways literature can be and has been employed in the foreign language classroom.

1. The essence of controversy on the use of literature in EFL/ESL
From the 18th century to the mid 19th century, 'English literature' was designated a much broader scope as an educational subject, including not only poetry and fiction, but also history, biography, scientific, didactic and expository writing. In the 18th century, the field of English studies placed a premium on aligning the ability to produce oral and written discourse with an appreciation for literature. In other words, Literature was not treated as a distinct subject; rather its study was woven into the teaching of classical rhetoric which was then aimed at enhancing in learners the skills of discovery and communication (Spack, 1985). What this auspicious historical point bears is that current beliefs as to the potential of literature for fostering 'communicative competence' in language learners have a long history to them. However, it needs to be admitted that not all aspects of 'communication' as conceptualized today were attended to at that time.

However, the swinging of the pendulum which has always characterized the field of language teaching did not leave attitudes toward using literature in L1/EFL/ESL untouched. In parallel with the19th century's surge of concern with comprehension rather than production in English and literature's studies, which were then indistinguishable, communication gave way to formal correctness as a prime goal to be achieved in the field of rhetoric (ibid.). Induced by both socioeconomic and pedagogical concerns, this shift of emphasis to grammatical instruction and error correction was probably the first ominous sign to herald the controversial position of literature in language teaching. It led literary scholars to avoid dancing attendance to rhetoricians and to run their own reader-centered literary criticism courses, giving literature its deserved scope as poetry, drama and fiction.

This way the once indistinguishable fields of literature and language studies were dissociated and the role of literature in language teaching with its emphasis on form and correctness at the time was put under a question mark for a number of reasons which were to sojourn the mysterious land of ELT for a matter of a century. McKay (1982) contends "it is easy to view any attention to literature as unnecessary" (p.529) and enumerates three of the most common counterarguments regarding the payoffs of using literature in the language classroom:

1. Literature's structural complexity, and unique and sometimes nonstandard use of language preclude the teaching of grammar which is one of the main goals of language teachers. This point is also recapitulated by Savvidou (2004) who states that "the creative use of language

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in poetry and prose often deviates from the conventions and rules which govern standard, non-literary discourse...".

2. Literature has nothing to offer to EAP (English for Academic Purposes) and ESP (English for Specific Purposes) courses where the focus is on meeting the students' academic and professional goals.
3. Literature is highly culturally charged, hence its conceptual difficulty and its hindrance, rather than facilitation, of learning the target language.

Arguments *against* the use of literature in language classrooms, however, are by a wide margin exceeded by those arguments which go *for* it. This is understandable if one is aware of the assumptions and views current theory and research in language acquisition, teaching and learning have put forth, and of the potential of literature to realize them in practice.

As far as the teaching of grammar is concerned, research on the concept of communicative competence, capitalizing on correct, appropriate and effective language behavior (Ellis, 1994), and the distinction made between language usage and language use both justify the use of literary texts in language classrooms. The reason is literature can be thought of as a field which can be plowed for developing an understanding of language usage through different methods of consciousness raising and form-focused instruction regarding particular grammatical structures, word forms and common expressions. Much more, however, can be gained by exploring the way such atomistic aspects of language are used in discourse, i.e. at a suprasentential level. This resonates with contemporary beliefs in the significance of the context of language use which is most delicately developed in literary texts.

Much can also be said to reciprocate the critics' contention concerning the contribution of literature to meeting the objectives of EAP and ESP courses. Notwithstanding the fact that literary texts differ from EAP or ESP pre-ordained materials in the extent of direct relevance, in so far as literature can foster learners' motivation to read and write and consequently their overall reading and writing proficiency, it can serve their academic and occupational needs. (McKay 1982). It follows that usefulness seems to be more a matter of the skill with which literature is employed in such courses than whether or not it should be employed.

As far as the cultural load of literature is concerned, Chastain (1988) sees the teaching of culture as "an integral, organized component of the course content" of a language program (p.298) due to the inextricable interconnection of language and culture and the significance of an awareness of and tolerance for intercultural differences. Given this, literature is the best ground for the genuine exploration of the target culture (Gajdusek, 1988; McKay, 1982).

A fourth point of controversy has been pointed out by Savvidou (2004). She draws attention to Kinneavy (1983)'s tripartite classification of discourse into expressive, transactional and poetic types, and attributes language teachers' reluctance to employ poetic language, among others, to literature's detachment from the reader' immediate social context. This decontextualized nature of literature places greater demands on the processes of interpreting the text, making inferences and negotiating meaning. However, Savvidou cites Widowson (1979) as stating that interpretive procedures involved in reading literature are not essentially different from those involved in reading other types of discourse. In a similar vein, Gajdusek (1988) states that literature is both literally and figuratively decontextualized. However, instead of viewing it as a drawback which devalues literary texts among other language learning materials, he asserts that the context-reduced nature of literature entails two other features which make it a perfect means for developing communicative competence in learners:

1. Internal coherence: Each line interrelates with other lines to create an internally coherent meaning. It is exactly this self-sufficiency of a literary text which engages the reader in interpretation, meaning negotiation and the generation of coherent discourse-based meaning, hence literature's highly interactive demands on learners.
2. Conscious patterning: The language of a literary text is fashioned into recurring patterns of sounds, meanings and structures, connecting intellectual, emotional and physical

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experiences. Discovering, exploring and appreciating these patterns would create a lot of reader-text interaction which is an essential feature of communicative and interactional competence.

2. The payoffs of using literature in EFL/ESL

Notwithstanding the few controversial points regarding whether literature can be used to enhance the efficiency of language learning programs, the relevant literature abounds with the reasons why literary exploration can be beneficial in the language classroom. Some of these reasons were mentioned in the previous section to render arguments against the applicability of literary texts in the language classroom untenable. But there is more to literature than has already been mentioned. Van (2009) believes studying literature in the EFL classroom is advantageous for a number of reasons:

- It provides meaningful contexts;
- It involves a profound range of vocabulary, dialogues and prose;
- It appeals to imagination and enhances creativity;
- It develops cultural awareness;
- It encourages critical thinking;
- It is in line with CLT (Communicative Language Teaching) principles.

He elaborates this last point by specifying the ways in which literary exploration I the language classroom can go hand in hand with the main tenets of CLT:

- *Meaning* is the outcome of the interaction between the reader's experience on the one hand, and the text's language, the reading context and the ideological assumptions underlying the text on the other. Accordingly, literature can enhance meaning.
- Learning is facilitated through *involvement and joy*, which can be created by literary style. Moreover, reading literature makes for more *active and critical thinking* and learning.
- Learning is facilitated through *authentic communication* and active involvement. As such, literature can be particularly useful as it provides opportunities for student-centered activities and collaborative group work.
- The *role of learners* as active and autonomous participants is emphasized in CLT, and as literature reading creates individual meanings, this goal is achieved.
- The *role of teachers* as facilitators, guides and active planners is embodied in the process of literary work and analysis.

It can be realized that those features for which literature in the EFL classroom has been criticized, i.e. its cultural load, structural complexity and non-normative use of language, are exactly what can be employed to enrich language teaching and learning experiences. For one, Zoreda and Vivaldo-Lima (2008) state that given the significance of connecting culture to the language learning process, "literature modules would be a great way to incorporate U.S. and British cultural elements while strengthening English reading abilities" (p.22). They bring up some other reasons to justify the use of literature in the language classroom:

- It helps language teachers foster their own cultural, linguistic and interpretive skills.
- It involves students overcome negative attitudes, if any, toward the target culture.
- It introduces variety into the language classroom.

Along the same lines, upon browsing the literature, Gajdusek (1988) adds some other advantages:

- It serves as a stimulus for composition.
- It is a perfect means for constituting content for content-based classes.
- It encourages talking.
- It helps generate purposeful referential questions.
- It provides for highly motivated small group work.

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- It makes for dramatic vocabulary growth and the contextualized teaching of complex sentence grammar.

To these, Arthur (1968) adds the fact that certain syntactic patterns, including passives, subordinate clauses and syntactic word order inversions, are encountered more frequently in literary texts. In addition, he believes, the vocabulary growth brought about by reading literature is attributable to the greater range of vocabulary used in written English and in literary texts.

Nasr (2001) reviews the related literature and makes some additional points in favor of literary exploration in EFL/ESL classes:

- It has the potential to consolidate the four language skills: reading, writing, speaking and listening.
- It requires learners to think out and put into practice special reading strategies to deal with the idiosyncratic characteristics of verse and prose.
- It broadens intellectual perspectives, and boosts cognitive maturation.
- It helps learners develop feelings for the language they are learning.

Ladousse-Porter (2001) postulate that on top of its appeal to creativity and imagination, reading a work of literature activates and enhances the reader's emotional intelligence (EQ), and this makes literature particularly suited to the language classroom where the constituents of emotional intelligence, namely self-awareness, self-regulation, motivation, empathy and social skills (Goleman, 1998), all contribute to more effective language learning.

It needs to be reiterated that the current consensus of opinion regarding the integration of literature in language programs is overwhelming, and by far exceeds the points of controversy. This consensus holds great promises as it is informed by current research in language teaching, language learning and acquisition, and psychology.

3. Approaches to teaching literature: three classifications

A work of literature can be approached in a number of ways. An understanding of these approaches is essential if teachers, learners and other stakeholders in the learning process are to determine how best to employ the resources it provides with the purpose of improving language learning programs. A general categorization of approaches to teaching literature is provided by Maley (1989) who distinguishes '*the study of literature'* as a cultural artifact from '*the use of literature as a resource for language learning'*. He further asserts that the former can be either critical or stylistic:

1. **The critical literary approach**: This approach mainly focuses on what Maley calls "the literariness of the texts we study" (p.10), i.e. motivation, characterization, background, etc. He believes this approach assumes a reasonable level of language proficiency and familiarity with literary terms and conventions
2. **The stylistic approach**: This approach is aimed at making textual discoveries and interpretations by describing and analyzing the language of a literary text.

Maley goes on to state that to be used in the EFL classroom, the critical literary approach demands a great amount of linguistic preparation, and that the stylistic approach might better serve language learning and teaching purposes, but it, too, is largely contingent on linguistic competence in the target language and cannot deservedly further language learning. The approach he favors is one which posits no dichotomy between language and literature and which uses literature as one among the many resources for language learning. This approach, he maintains, will generate greater motivation and an awareness of language functions in learners in the course of their interaction and engagement with the text.

A more comprehensive classification of approaches to literary analysis is offered by Van (2009):

1. **New criticism.** Within this approach, literature is conceived of as a self-contained whole, independent of the author's intention, the reader's response, and the social, political and historical background of the text. Activities mainly involve the study of literary devices and formal elements of the piece with no regard for its beauty and value. Moreover, the literary

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texts to work on are generally selected from among the *traditional canon*, which are too long, difficult, unfamiliar and irrelevant to students' lives. As such, they might border on the banal for learners and create a negative attitude toward literature.

2. **Structuralism.** Leaving no room for subjective meaning and the reader's response, this model approaches a literary text scientifically by focusing on processes, themes, structures and mechanical formal relationships that are involved in the production of meaning and that place the work into a meaningful hierarchical system. It follows that because of its overemphasis on the linguistic code, it is less relevant than New Criticism for the teaching of literature.
3. **Stylistics.** This model approaches literature by analyzing the features of literary language, for example its unconventionality and non-grammaticality, to develop students' sensitivity to literature, and to have them make aesthetic judgments and interpretations of the text based upon their linguistic knowledge. An example of such an approach is the comparative technique in which learners compare literary and non-literary registers to work out the various ways language is used to accomplish things. However, though aesthetically relevant, the stylistics approach poses challenges to the learners' communicative competence and teachers' knowledge of literary language.
4. **Reader-Response.** This model predicates on a commitment to the transactional relationship between the reader's personal experiences, opinions and feelings on the one hand and the text on the other. As such, it goes hand-in-hand with theories of top-down reading and readers' schemata. In the EFL classroom, this approach has much to offer as it:
    - makes literature more accessible by activating students' background knowledge;
    - harnesses emotional reactions for classroom instruction;
    - increases students' individual and group participation and motivation since it personalizes the learning experience;
    - provides for a student-centered and process-oriented classroom;

    However, there are some problems, too, as:
    - students' responses may deviate from the work;
    - considering the learners' language proficiency and culture, selecting appropriate materials may be problematic;
5. **Language-based.** On top of emphasis on literary language, this approach facilitates student responses and experience with literature, through a variety of activities as cloze procedures, brainstorming, summarizing, jigsaw reading, etc. which enhance collaboration, independence, interaction, peer teaching, and motivation. Accordingly, it meets the students' needs in both reading literature, and learning a language as it results in four-skill English language development. The teacher's role is not to impose interpretation, but to clarify technical terms, offer appropriate classroom procedures and intervene to provide stimuli and prompts.
6. **Critical Literacy.** Stemming from such theories as critical language studies, feminism and educational sociology, this model focuses on the relationship between language use and social power. It is aimed at facilitating students' critical awareness about the role of language in establishing social relations, and encouraging learners to explore how social and political factors shape the language they are learning. These are the tenets of 'Transformative Pedagogy'. To employ such an approach, teachers must consider the degree of openness of their students' society and culture so as to create a safe atmosphere.

It is evident that this classification is an improvement over Maley's, and formalizes reasons behind the prevailing favor with the use of literature in the language classroom. Having shed light on all these approaches, Van goes on to point to the general consensus that *Reader-Response* and *Language-based* seem to be best suited for EFL learners while conceding that other approaches are not without their merits.

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As another framework, Savvidou (2004) cites Carter and Long (1991) as describing three main models of teaching literature likely to fit in an EFL/ESL program.

1. **The Cultural Model:** Within this model, the focus is on language as a cultural artefact, requiring learners to investigate a literary text from social, political, literary and historical perspectives.
2. **The Language Model:** This model has a lot in common with the 'language-based' model of Van mentioned earlier. It is based on the idea that literature provides a rich repertoire of contextualized linguistic features which can be systematically practiced through a wide range of activities with no regard for the literary quality of the text or reader-text interaction.
3. **The Personal Growth Model:** This model has the potential to meet the aims of the first two models, i.e. furthering language learning and cultural awareness, and to bring about personal development through placing a premium on the learner's own response to and interaction with the text, feelings, ideas and opinions.

Savvidou asserts that because of its being teacher-centered, the cultural model has fallen out of favour. So has the linguistic model due to its hindrance of experiencing literature as literature and not as language. She further argues for an integrated model comprising elements of all the three approaches which would pay off linguistically, methodologically and motivationally.

The common thread running through the related research indicates a shift of concern from the solely linguistic analysis of literary texts in the language classroom to a concern with enhancing inter-cultural awareness, appreciating learners' interpretations of and responses to such texts, and developing the ability to see "with different eyes" (Oster, 1989, p.85).

4. Approaches reflecting groundbreaking ELT theory

Roughing out approaches to teaching literature in the EFL/ESL classroom might convey the idea that one can be selected as unsurpassed and that some have nothing to offer to the language classroom. However, upon browsing the related theory and research, advantages of each and every of the approaches sketched in the previous section surface, and it seems a good idea to think of them as structured along a continuum of usefulness in the face of idiosyncratic challenges of the classroom in which they will be used. However, it is undeniable that three of the approaches, namely *the personal growth model*, *the critical literacy approach* and *the reader response approach* more clearly reflect insights borrowed from recent applied linguistics and language acquisition research and share their grave concern with 'readers'.

The personal growth model, as the title implies, echoes some of the underlying tenets of the humanistic approach to language teaching as put forth by Williams and Burden (1997):

- involving the whole person in the learning process;
- engaging feelings and emotions;
- developing personal identity;
- encouraging self-knowledge and self-evaluation;
- establishing a sense of personal value in learners;
- encouraging creativity.

What this tie implies is that the personal growth model of teaching literature is in keeping with some of the most widely held beliefs and theories in ELT.

Similarly, the reader-response model is informed by recent theory and research. The upshot of this approach is that "individual responses to literary works could be as valid as authoritative, formal techniques of literary exploration" (Spack, 1985, p.708). This approach unambiguously resonates with Widdowson's postulation as to text-mediated reader-writer interaction (1979; cited in McKay, 1982): the idea that reading is not a matter of reacting to a self-contained text which awaits objective interpretation, and that readers' experiences and background are necessarily implicated in the process of interacting with a text. It is believed that in order to interact with, rather than react to, a text, reader motivation is of critical significance and literature, when approached in the right way, does guarantee this motivating effect. The reader-response approach is also tie with

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the schema theory of language processing which places a premium on the reader's active, rather than passive, involvement in the task of reading (Carrell, P.L. & Eisterhold, J.C.,1983): "Comprehension never occurs in a vacuum, and the reader's prior knowledge, experience, and even emotional state are an important part of the process by which meaning is created" (Gajdusek, 1988 , p.231). The point is also recapitulated by Cadorath and Harris (1998, p. 188) who state that the "text itself has no meaning, it only provides direction for the reader to construct meaning from the reader's own experience". This way of conceptualizing 'reading' has opened up an array of classroom techniques which draw upon literary texts in the language classroom to foster, among others, L2 writing and speaking skills.

Another model of teaching literature which can further language teaching and learning is the 'critical literacy' approach. This approach reverberates with calls for a critical or transformative pedagogy in education in general and language education in particular with its focus on 'student empowerment'. Critical pedagogy can be defined as:

> "Habits of thought, reading, writing, and speaking which go beneath surface meaning, first impressions, dominant myths, official pronouncements, traditional clichés, delivered wisdom, and mere opinions, to understand the deep meaning, root causes, social context, ideology, and personal consequences of any action, event, object, process, organization, experience, text, subject matter, policy, mass media, or discourse" (Shor, 1992,p.129).

As far as TESOL is concerned, Kim (2006) asserts that given the number of seminal publications on the subject, the critical pedagogy approach to literacy seems to be a viable and legitimate paradigm for the teaching and learning of foreign languages. Such a paradigm would view learners not as passive recipients of knowledge, but as possessing social identities who actively engage in exploring the underlying social, political and cultural assumptions of a text. But the question is: What kind of texts would best trigger this questioning attitude in language learners?

Literature has been recognized as one viable resource for fostering such habits in EFL/ESL learners. Oster (1989) states that adopting a critical perspective toward what one reads has always been frowned upon in traditional education systems and might involve great risk. Given this, literature, he maintains, provides a safe ground on which to practice seeing from different perspectives since it is man-made and fallible. It follows that literary texts can serve as a launch pad to catapult the aims of reversing assumptions behind value systems, furthering originality rather than memorization, fostering openness to a plurality of views, and encouraging disclosure of inner feelings and experiences among learners.

It follows from what was said that all reader-centered approaches to teaching literature place a premium on the 'literary experience' literary exploration in the language classroom must effect in learners. According to Arthur (1968), literary experience is an unconscious state of total intellectual and emotional engagement which must be regarded, not as a by-product of, rather as a prerequisite to using literature in the language classroom. This state is what is referred to as "psychological flow", a concept which has found its way to applied linguistics from the psychology of task performance. 'Flow' which is characterized by heightened mental processes is characteristic of successful language learners (Strevens, 1986).

Other approaches do not directly mirror current ELT principles and are devoid of a concern for the reader and the world he brings to bear upon the task of reading literature. It needs to be reiterated that this does not amount to their being unavailing for the language classroom. Such approaches can benefit language learners depending on the way they are paired with other approaches, the range of classroom tasks and activities teachers draw upon to realize them, the language proficiency of learners, their learning styles and preferences, and a host of other context-specific factors.

5. How to integrate literature into the language classroom? Some practical hints

Convinced about the wide array of benefits the use of literature can bring to language learners, the question is how to exploit this potential. The pro-literature lobby have put forth several practical

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tips and provided examples regarding the implementation of the mentioned approaches to teaching literature in the language classroom.

The first question which crosses the mind is what kinds of literary text best suit EFL/ESL classes. The answer to this question is contingent upon addressing a dilemma articulated long ago by Arthur (1968) regarding how to set off on the apparently daunting task of literary exploration: It is generally admitted that in order to succeed as a language learning asset, literature must first effect a literary experience in learners. The point is some practitioners believe this literary experience won't be accomplished unless the reader has already mastered the rich vocabulary, complex syntactic structures and underlying cultural assumptions of the text, and if he has, literature would be of little value as a language learning device; simply put, the use of literature for learning a language would preclude experiencing literature as literature.

Arthur (1968, p.199) states "second language teachers interested in using literature in their classes must be aware of how literature can teach second language skills while, at the same time, retaining its literary value for second language learners." In the first place, this goal can be achieved by selecting the right kind of text. Three suggestions have been put forth to get around the problem of linguistic and cultural complexity (McKay, 1892):

- *Using simplified texts*: The use of simplified texts is generally frowned upon on the grounds that simplification reduces the information density, cohesion and, in consequence, readability of a text. However, upon browsing the literature, examples of the successful use of simplified texts in the language classroom can be found. Zoreda and Vivaldo-Lima (2008, pp. 22-23) state "there is a renewed interest in integrating graded literary materials such as simplified novels that are written specially for beginning and intermediate level students". They report their success with the use of simplified novels along with the novels' audio and film versions to offer scaffolded instruction on linguistic and intercultural skills.
- *Using easy texts*: The question with using easy texts is what 'easy' means. According to McKay (1982), although there are readability counts to determine the lexical and syntactic complexity of a text, there are no generally agreed-upon standards to determine the complexity of a work of literature in terms of its underlying cultural assumptions, characterization, plot and its other literary qualities. The selection of easy texts is, therefore, mostly based on intuition.
- *Using young adult texts*: These texts can benefit a wide range of learners because of their inherent simplicity, both linguistic and literary. Such texts, according to McKay (1982), are characterized by brevity, a small cast of characters, stylistic simplicity and such relevant themes as personal growth. However, the problem with the use of such texts for adult classes is that adult learners might not identify with themes of interest to young adults, and their motivation and willingness to interact with the text may suffer.

It follows that there is no clear-cut rule as to the selection of literary texts for the EFL/ESL classroom. Appropriacy seems to be a function of several classroom and course variables which teachers need to analyze before deciding what kind of literary text to use. However, it needs to be mentioned that although the selection of texts is of utmost significance, the way the text is approached by both teachers and learners and the nature of tasks and activities that learners engage in have a more decided influence on the success with which literature is employed in the language classroom.

Some of the tips and frameworks put forward are generally applicable to poetry, short story and drama, while some have been specifically devised for one of these categories. Vera (1991) distinguishes between *intensive* and *extensive* literature reading programs; the extensive program which draws on novels and short stories has two versions:

1. *interventionist*, in which the teacher assigns the students with a pre-determined list of books which they will read and be tested on;
2. *non-interventionist*, in which the students themselves choose the books and then write a standard reading questionnaire on them.

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On the other hand, the intensive reading program draws on classroom student-centred activities and tasks to improve the linguistic competence of learners. The remaining of this section focuses on the intensive use of literature in the classroom.

Maley (1989) believes any literary text can best be approached through a three-step procedure:

1. Framing or preparing learners to deal with the text. This stage can involve thematic preparation activities, for example asking learners to brain storm on the general topic of the piece or engaging them in a passage on a related topic and eliciting their ideas. Teacher can also introduce activities to sensitize learners to differences between poetry and prose. Such activities can include presenting learners with extracts from poetry and prose and having them recognize which category they belong to.
2. Focusing or leading learners to engage in and understand the text. At t his stage, instead of asking learners to read the text and answer comprehension questions, teachers can juxtapose the text with another text on a related topic and have learners compare and contrast the two texts through guiding questions. It is also a good idea to extract key phrases and utterances from the text and have learners match them with 'effect words', i.e. words which can best express learners' feelings toward those excerpts.
3. Diverging or leading learners to engage in parallel activities which extend the theme and allow learners to voice their own opinions, feelings and thoughts. At this stage, role plays in which interviewers ask characters about their motives for action and various writing activities can be exploited.

Upon contemplating Maley's framework, one comes to the conclusion that his approach aims at creating and sustaining literary experience in learners, with little, if any, focus on the language of the piece. As he himself states, the framework ensures constant reference to the text and interaction between the reader and the text on the one hand, and between the teacher and the learner on the other.

Gajdusek (1988) offers a four-level sequence of activities for in-class work. He exemplifies his approach with a story, though he claims that it is equally applicable to all kinds of literary texts. Following is a rough sketch of the four levels of the model along with his suggested activities for each stage.

I. Pre-reading work

- *Pre-reading vocabulary work*

1. Cloze exercises for words whose meaning can be derived from the context;
2. Providing information on words that bear clues to the cultural and emotional meaning of the text;
3. Training learners in identifying the category of and dismissing words that proficient readers merely categorize;

- *Additional pre-reading work*

1. Student logs
2. Write-Before-You-Read activities

II. Factual in-class work

- *Point of view*

1. Identifying the point of view and discussing its implications;
2. Rewriting the story from different points of view;

- *Character*

1. Listing the main characters;
2. Analyzing the main characters, their relationships, motivations and conflicts;

- *Setting*

1. Providing background information about the author in the pre-reading work;
2. Assigning students to groups to report on the general and specific time and place;

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- *Action*:

1. Asking questions and checking for comprehension;
2. Having learners work out the time line of the story;

III. Analysis

- *Structure-Plot, conflict, climax*

1. Investigating the plot in terms of conflict, climax, denouement;
2. Having learners identify the climax line and then compare their ideas;

- *Theme*

1. Eliciting several topics and having learners articulate the theme using those topics;
2. Having learners articulate the theme by analyzing paragraph foci;

- *Style*

1. Pursuing patterns and figurative language;
2. Having learners divide the text into significant sections and name them with a word or phrase that reveals the author's purpose;

IV. Extending activities

- *In-class work*

1. Straightforward debate of issues
2. Role-plays and dramatizations

- *Student writing*

1. Having low proficiency learners practice sentence level grammar in writing;
2. Assigning writing tasks from journals to critical essays;

In his illuminating study, Davies (1990) includes 'exploiting scripted play' as one of the several options for the use of drama in the language classroom. Recognizing the vitality of linguistic accessibility and topic relevance in the selection of plays, he posits a procedure which can, in his own words, "extract the most out of a play" on behalf of language learners (p. 93). The procedure is as follows:

1. The students read the text before listening to a recording of it.
2. The teacher and students discuss the text.
3. The teacher reads the text and/or plays the recording a second time, pausing to draw attention to or elicit ideas on particular utterances, attitudes and emotions.
4. The teacher assigns the students into groups to discuss and fully grasp the setting and characterization of the play.
5. The students choose their roles and rehearse the play.
6. The students perform the play, or a scene/scenes from it.
7. Class discussion follows each performance.

Davies' approach, as he himself admits, is one among numerous possibilities regarding the exploitation of plays for language learning depending on the language proficiency of learners and the objectives of the course.

The literature also abounds with ideas concerning the use of poetry in EFL classrooms. Akyel (1995) reports the results of her study in which TEFL student teachers were guided to stylistically analyze poems prior to designing tasks and activities, i.e. to detect and interpret the distinctive grammatical, lexico-semantic, and discoursal features of the language of the poem:

The student teachers stated that stylistic analysis was an effective tool for preparing their own language awareness activities. Moreover, they reported that they could use these language activities successfully in EFL classrooms for practice teaching (p.63).

Activities developed on the basis of student teacher stylistic analyses of poems aimed at:

- relating the title and theme of the poem to the students' personal experience by having them brainstorm about the topic or answer particular topic-related questions;
- focusing on the referential meaning of the lexical items used in the poem by having learners match such items with their definitions prior to reading the poem;

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- raising learners' awareness of the poet's unique choice of words to effect special meanings by juxtaposing their usual and unusual use in sentences;
- focusing on collocations and word associations by having them groups words and phrases together;
- improving inference-making and interpretive skills through, for example, providing a number of interpretation sentences and asking learners to mark them true or false providing evidence from the text; etc.
- combining interpretation with learners' personal evaluation by having them interpret excerpts of the poems and express their own ideas on them.

This study indicates the gains the stylistic approach to teaching literature brings about for EFL learners. It is also manifest that although this approach is not purportedly reader-centered, activities can be designed such that learners are given a chance to express their voices as the last aim above indicates.

Captivated by the great potential poetry writing can offer EFL/ESL learners, Preston (1982) states that this potential can be best realized by having learners "find and recreate within themselves the main feelings of the poem they read" (p.489). Following Koch (1973), he used new, culturally identifiable, and emotionally appealing poetry ideas and had his student teachers articulate their own feelings and ideas in poetry stimulated by carefully selected poems while keeping poetic analysis as simple as possible and leaving concerns with the formal aspects of the students' poems until after the poems had been completed. Preston's approach clearly diverges from Akyel's in its emphasis on literary experience rather than the linguistic analysis of the poem to arrive at interpretations. What is clear is that both approaches have proved beneficial to language learners in the context in which they were applied.

6. Conclusion

Given the points of controversy and consensus as to the use of literature in the language classroom, various approaches which can be adopted to such an undertaking, and the practical tips and frameworks presented in this review and the multitudinous others, it is upon EFL/ESL materials developers, syllabus designers and teachers to determine their stance. They may select the most appropriate approach or combination of approaches, design activities and tasks and make the most out of literature to enhance language learning and teaching by analyzing the idiosyncratic features of the classroom, educational system and culture in which they will be used.

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