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Research Article

### The Use of English Literary Works in Teaching English for Language Class

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KEYWORDS	A B S T R A C T
English; Literary; Language	This article aims to analyze the use of literature as a popular technique for teaching both basic language skills (i.e. listening, speaking, reading and writing). The method that employed in this article was descriptive research, in which the researchers review some articles. The data were collected in text analysis by using descriptive method. The data gathered from four articles entitled (1) Developing second language reading comprehension through short story; (2) Using songs effectively to teach English to young learners; (3) Using Drama Activities; and (4) Teaching poetry: a descriptive case study of poetry unit in a classroom of urban deaf adolescent. The result shows that literary works give some benefits for students to develop language skills. Each type of literary works has certain advantages in developing students' language skills such as reading, speaking, listening and writing. Besides, literary works also can support other language components such as vocabulary, pronunciation, spelling and so forth. Hence, it can be concluded that literary works has a great benefit to enhance students' communication in written and spoken form for language teaching process.
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### INTRODUCTION

Teaching literature is essential part of foreign language teaching. By studying a degree in English literature (such as English literature, linguistics, and creative writing), students will learn how to analyze a multitude of texts and write clearly using several different styles. English literature refers to the study of texts from around the world, written, in the English language. During the era, translating literary texts from the second/ foreign language to the students' native language was one of the main learning activities. Since then, literature is undergoing an extensive

reconsideration within the language teaching profession. Literary works use in ESL/EFL classes has attracted more interest among teachers, and more and more studies on how to use literature in EFL/ESL classes are conducted.

In recent years, the role of literature is as a basic component and source of authentic text of the language curriculum. Therefore, literary works were a notable source of material in ESL/EFL teaching (Prodromou, 2000). However, when GTM (*Grammar Translation Method*) was replaced by the Structuralism Approach in 1960s to the end of 1970s, literature was no longer used. Structuralism was concerned with correctness of grammatical form and not with content

or interpretation of the written word or style. In other words, teaching a foreign language was regarded as a matter of linguistics. Then, when the Direct Method, the Audio-lingual, Community Language Learning, Suggestopedia, the Silent Way, Total Physical Response, and the Natural Approach successively dominated ESL/EFL teaching, literature was not utilized.

Theoretically, using of literature in language teaching is very advantageous for it offers four benefits: authentic material, cultural enrichment, language advancement, and personal growth (Collie & Slater, 1991). This is in line with Erkaya (2005) who notes four benefits of using of short stories to teach ESL/EFL, i.e. motivational, literary, cultural and higher-order thinking benefits. First of all, literary texts can be more beneficial than informational materials in stimulating the acquisition process as they provide authentic contexts for processing new language. Second, using literature in language teaching has the advantage of providing cultural information about the target language. Literary texts increase foreign language learners' insight into the country and the people whose language is being learnt (Collie and Slater, 1991), which fosters learners' ability to interpret discourse in different social and cultural target language contexts. Finally, since literature enables students to understand and appreciate other cultures, societies and ideologies different from their own, it encourages personal growth and intellectual development (Carter and Long, 1991).

### **Literature and The Teaching of Language Skills**

Literature plays an important role in teaching four basic language skills like reading, writing, listening and speaking. However, when using literature in the language classroom, skills should never be taught in isolation but in an integrated way. Teachers should try to teach basic language skills as an integral part of oral and written language use, as part of the means for creating both referential and interactional meaning, not merely as an aspect of the oral and written production of words, phrases and sentences.

### **Literature and Reading**

ESL/EFL teachers should adopt student-centered approach toward comprehension of a literary work. In reading lesson, discussion begins at the literal level with direct questions of fact regarding setting, characters, and plot which can be answered by specific reference to the text. When students master literal understanding, they move to the inferential level, where they must make speculations and interpretations concerning the characters, setting, and theme, and where they produce the author's point of view. After comprehending a literary selection at the literal and inferential levels, students are ready to do a collaborative

work. That is to state that they share their evaluations of the work and their personal reactions to it - to its characters, its theme(s), and the author's point of view. This is also the suitable time for them to share their reactions to the work's natural cultural issues and themes. The third level, the personal / evaluative level stimulates students to think imaginatively about the work and provokes their problem-solving abilities. Stern (1991:332) stated that discussion deriving from such questions can be the foundation for oral and written activities. And this makes students can develop their communication, language and literacy for studying English.

### **Literature and Writing**

Literature can be a powerful and motivating source for writing in ESL / EFL, both as a model and as subject matter. Literature as a model occurs when student writing becomes closely similar to the original work or clearly imitates its content, theme, organization, and /or style. However, when student writing exhibits original thinking like interpretation or analysis, or when it emerges from, or is creatively stimulated by, the reading, literature serves as subject matter. Literature houses in immense variety of themes to write on in terms of guided, free, controlled and other types of writing.

### **Literature, Speaking, and Listening**

The study of literature in a language class, though being mainly associated with reading and writing, can play an equally meaningful role in teaching both speaking and listening. Oral reading, dramatization, improvisation, role-playing, pantomime, reenactment, discussion, and group activities may center on a work of literature.

### **Oral Reading**

Language teachers can make listening comprehension and pronunciation interesting, motivating and contextualized at the upper levels, playing a recording or video of a literary work, or reading literature aloud themselves. Having students read literature aloud contributes to developing speaking as well as listening ability. Moreover, it also leads to improving pronunciation. Pronunciation may be the focus before, during, and / or after the reading.

### **Drama**

Needless to say, literature-based dramatic activities are valuable for ESL / EFL. They facilitate and accelerate development of the oral skills since they motivate students to achieve a clearer comprehension of a work's plot and a deeper comprehension and awareness of its characters. Though drama in the classroom can assume many forms, there are three main types, which are *dramatization*, *role-playing*, *improvization*.

### **Improvization and Role-Playing**

Both improvization and role-playing may be developed around the characters, plot, and themes of a literary work. Improvisation is a more systematic activity, i.e., dramatization without a script. There is an identifiable plot with a beginning, middle, and end in improvisation. However, in role playing, students picture characters from the work being read and join in a speaking activity other than a dramatization, such as an interview or panel discussion.

### Group Activities

Making each student responsible for facts and ideas to be contributed and discussed, group activities stimulates total participation. All students are involved and the participation is multi directional. When teaching English through literature, some of the group activities used in language classroom are *general class discussion*, *small-group work*, *panel discussions*, and *debates*. All of these group activities both develop the speaking abilities of the students and give importance to pronunciation practice. Teachers indicate pronunciation errors of the students during the act of such activities so as to correct such errors (Stern 1991:337).

Literature like short stories, novels, poems, and songs can contain many values in teaching English. When students study English literature, students will grow to understand how books, verse, poetry, and prose contribute to the culture. Students can study English in variety of literature styles, genres and types. That is why the author is interested in this study to know and to describe the use of literary works in teaching English in language classroom.

## METHOD

The current research was a library research where the subject of research was to analyze four related articles. Among of them dealt with teaching English through short stories, songs, drama, and poetry in the classroom. The research design was descriptive research which the researchers described the analysis of each articles of literary works. In doing this research, the researcher used a descriptive method, firstly, the researchers collect the articles; secondly, analyze each of articles; thirdly, describe the findings of the articles. The text analysis was used for collecting data. For analyzing the data, the researchers made summary in descriptive way.

## RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

In this part, the researcher would like to elaborate the findings based on the four articles that have been reviewed. First, the research was conducted by Bilal, H. A. et al entitled **“Developing second language reading comprehension through short story”**. They carried out

experimental study which aimed for developing students' reading comprehension through short story and for elicit students' attitude toward the use of short story in reading class.

In this research, the participants were 20 students at the eighth grade. Since the researchers used non-equivalent pre-test post-test design, the researchers treated the sample by using short story. The instruments used were multiple choice test and questionnaire. To know the students' development in reading comprehension, the researchers gave a pre-test (in form of multiple-choice test) before the treatment and post-test (in form of multiple-choice test) after the treatment. As well as, the researchers gave the questionnaire before and after the treatment to measure students' attitude toward the implementation of short story in reading class.

The result of this study shows that, there is positive development in reading comprehension after being treated by short story. Since short story provides real life situation, students were getting benefit from this advantages of short story. They were more interested in developing their reading comprehension ability so that their reading ability developed well. Similarly, students' attitude toward the short story increased significantly. They have positive attitude after being treated by using short story.

In conclusion, teaching short story in language teaching will give positive benefit both for achievement in certain skill and students' attitude as well. Therefore, it is recommended for educators to use short story to develop English language skill. Next research entitled **“Using songs effectively to teach to teach English to young learners”** investigated by Neil. T. Millington (2011) from Ritsumeikan Asia Pacific University, Japan. The researcher believed that songs are considered as valuable pedagogical tool for develop student' language skills. In this research, he explored the way how to utilize the songs to develop the students' ability on listening skill, pronunciation, and vocabulary mastery. Besides, the researcher also discussed how song can reflect culture and increase students' overall enjoyment of learning a second language.

The first discussion is relating to how to utilize the songs in the teaching English language skills. The researcher emphasizes that one of the advantages of song is that songs are flexible. In teaching listening, for example, the researcher plays certain song to train students' ability in listening. He argues that by playing the song's lyrics repeatedly, the students will enjoy their learning instead of playing text recorder. Songs give enjoyment so that students are interested in learning English and finally they can develop their ability.

In addition, some classical songs sometimes reflect the students' real life. Logically, students will be interested in learning language since the materials that they use are suitable with their life. To sum up, songs is the valuable teaching tool that can be used to develop students' skill. Besides, probably the greatest benefit to using songs in the classroom is that they are enjoyable. Adapting existing children's songs is one method that teachers can use to increase their repertoire of songs, thus giving them more opportunity to use songs in their teaching contexts.

Another beneficial research deals with the use of drama in the language classroom. This research carried out by Munther Zyoud entitled **“Using Drama Activities and Techniques to Foster Teaching English as a Foreign Language: A Theoretical Perspective”**. In this research, he provided some theoretical reasons why drama is used in language classroom. The first, drama can foster students' language skill such as listening, reading, writing and speaking by creating the suitable context. Second, through drama, a class will address, practice and integrate reading, writing, speaking and listening. Third, drama also fosters and maintains students' motivation, by providing an atmosphere which is full of fun and entertainment. In doing so, it engages feelings and attention and enriches the learners' experience of the language.

Through the discussion of this research, it was found that drama is an appealing teaching strategy which promotes cooperation, collaboration, self-control, goal-oriented learning as well as emotional intelligence skills. Drama bridges the gap between course-book dialogues and natural usage, and can also help to bridge a similar gap between the classroom and real life situations by providing insights into how to handle tricky situations. Drama strengthens the bond between thought and expression in language, provides practice of supra-segmental and Para-language, and offers good listening practice. If drama is considered as a teaching method in the sense of being part of the eclectic approach to language teaching, then it can become a main aid in the acquisition of communicative competence. Drama activities facilitate the type of language behavior that should lead to fluency, and if it is accepted that the learners want to learn a language in order to make themselves understood in the target language, then drama does indeed further this end.

Moreover, one of the greatest advantages to be gained from the use of drama is that students become more confident in their use of English by experiencing the language in operation. Drama in the English language classroom is ultimately indispensable because it gives learners the chance to use their own personalities. It draws upon students' natural abilities to imitate and express

themselves, and if well-handled should arouse interest and imagination. Drama encourages adaptability, fluency, and communicative competence. It puts language into context, and by giving learners experience of success in real-life situations it should arm them with confidence for tackling the world outside the classroom.

The last research employed teaching language through poetry. This research has been undertaken by Rebecca Arenson and Robert. E. KretSchmer entitled **“Teaching poetry: a descriptive case study of poetry unit in a classroom of urban deaf adolescent”** They proposed a qualitative research where the participant consist of six and eight graders students from school for the deaf in northeastern United States of America.

The result reveals that one reason why the poetry unit was opened with and included ASL poetry throughout was that the students might be able to understand poems better in ASL than in English, which would thereby give them a feeling of success at understanding poetry. Although the students were not pure ASL users—they used many elements of English grammar in their signing—they did use ASL-like structures and conventions in their signing (for example, productive signing and the use of space), and interviews indicated that at least three did feel that they understood ASL poems better than written English poems. When asked to choose a poem that they could connect to their personal experience, all six students chose to write responses about particular ASL poems rather than written English poems.

In addition, the sixth- and eighth-grade deaf students in the present study had not had poetry in school before the unit we describe here, even though some reported that their younger hearing siblings were already posting their own poems on the internet. They also had never seen ASL poetry. A pre-unit discussion revealed that they had little understanding of poetry and considered it “boring.” Their comments indicated, however, that as a result of the unit, the students became very engaged in reading/watching poems, creating them, understanding their structural aspects, identifying different kinds of poems and poetic themes, and using poetic metaphors.

Based on the results, the use of literature in teaching English can enhance students in English skills such as listening, speaking, reading and writing. Besides, literary works also can support other language components such as vocabulary, pronunciation, and spelling. Brown (2001:14) in his article stated that teachers can use effectively in their classroom to help students develop listening skill and gain an appreciation for literature. So, the impact of listening can stimulate the senses and challenges of minds. Furthermore, Tursunbayevna (2020:272) stated that

literature played a very important role in teaching four basic English. Literature can help students improve their communication in variety of ways such as vocabulary, pronunciation, spelling, sentence formation, fluency, cultural insights and the like.

The impact of teaching English through literature on improving EFL can be used for further study to develop their language skills, including:

1. Listening  
Students can improve their listening ability by reading literature aloud
2. Speaking  
Students can improve their speaking ability by reading literature aloud
3. Pronunciation  
Students can improve their pronunciation by reading literature aloud
4. Reading  
Students can improve their reading through literature
5. Writing  
Students can improve their writing through literature
6. Literature  
Literature can also help students learn about culture and can be used to teach vocabulary and other languages areas.

The inclusion of literature in the language classroom is an important and valuable aspects of language education.

Some implication can also impact in teaching English through literature that students can learn new words and syntax. They can also learn how to use language for aesthetic purpose. Literature can make the teaching of a language more fun. Students can talk about interesting topics. Studying and teaching English with literature give students the tools to analyze the spoken and written words creatively.

The four basic language skills which were taught in an integrated way with the literature bring in valuable effect upon the learners' linguistic knowledge. Literary texts offer a rich source of linguistic input and can help learners to practice the four language skills-listening, speaking, reading and writing-in addition to presenting vocabulary, spelling, pronunciation and grammatical in English.

## CONCLUSION

From those four research deal with the use of several kinds of literary works, it turned out each type of literary works has certain advantages in developing students' language

skills such as reading, speaking, listening and writing. Besides, literary works can also support other language components such as vocabulary, pronunciation, spelling and so forth. Hence, it can be concluded that literary works has a great benefit for language teaching process. Furthermore, it is suggested for the educators to integrate literary works in teaching learning process. Besides, the teachers should package the activities as beauty as possible in order to attract the students to follow the lesson well.

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