

Contribution of Literature to Language Teaching and Learning

Hatice Okyar¹

Type/Tür:

Review/Derleme

Received/Geliş Tarihi: April 13/
13 Nisan 2020

Accepted/Kabul Tarihi: July 1/ 1
Temmuz 2020

Page numbers/Sayfa No: 330-343

Corresponding

Author/İletişimden Sorumlu

Yazar: okyarhatice@gmail.com



This paper was checked for plagiarism using iThenticate during the preview process and before publication. / Bu çalışma ön inceleme sürecinde ve yayımlanmadan önce iThenticate yazılımı ile taranmıştır.

Copyright © 2017 by

Cumhuriyet University, Faculty of Education. All rights reserved.

Abstract

The main purpose of this paper is to explain the advantages of using literature as a resource in second and foreign language classrooms. To this end, the benefits of integrating literature in language classrooms is first presented within the scope of the following items: a) authenticity, b) cultural awareness, c) thinking skills, d) personal development, e) four basic language skills (i.e. reading, writing, listening and speaking). In the second section, the paper provides information about the significant contribution that different literature genres (e.g. poetry, drama) can make to language learning. The third section of this article highlights the importance of specific criteria (e.g. students' language level, age, cultural background) for selecting appropriate literary texts to be used in foreign language classrooms. In the concluding section, this paper suggests that, in order to get the full benefit of these advantages, language teachers should be properly trained on the effective use of literary texts, as well. All in all, this paper emphasizes that literary texts, when chosen carefully, considering the features of the target group, and used effectively by well-trained teachers in educational settings, can add not only to the students' linguistic development, but also to their personal growth.

Keywords: Literature, language teaching, literary texts, foreign language teaching, language skills

Suggested APA Citation/Önerilen APA Atıf Biçimi:

Okyar, H. (2021). Contribution of literature to language teaching and learning. *Cumhuriyet International Journal of Education*, 10(1), 330-343. <http://dx.doi.org/10.30703/cije.719796>

¹ Dr. Öğretim Üyesi, Necmettin Erbakan Üniversitesi, Yabancı Diller Yüksekokulu, Konya/Türkiye
Asst. Prof. Dr., Necmettin Erbakan University, School of Foreign Languages, Konya/Turkey
e-mail: okyarhatice@gmail.com ORCID ID: orcid.org/0000-0003-4458-4805

Edebiyatın Dil Öğretimine ve Öğrenimine Katkısı

Öz

Bu çalışmanın temel amacı edebiyatın ikinci ve yabancı dil sınıflarında kaynak olarak kullanılmasının getirdiği faydaları açıklamaktır. Bu amaçla, ilk önce edebiyatın dil sınıflarına dahil edilmesinin getirdiği faydalar şu maddelerin kapsamı dahilinde sunulmuştur: a) otantiklik, b) kültürel farkındalık, c) düşünme becerileri, d) duygusal ve zihinsel gelişim, e) dört temel dil becerisi (okuma, yazma, dinleme, konuşma). İkinci bölümde bu çalışma farklı edebi türlerin (örneğin: şiir, drama) dil öğrenimine yaptığı önemli katkılar hakkında bilgi vermektedir. Çalışmanın üçüncü kısmı yabancı dil sınıflarında kullanılacak olan edebi metinlerin doğru bir şekilde seçilmesine dair dikkate alınması gereken temel kriterlerin (örneğin: öğrencilerin dil seviyesi, yaş, kültürel deneyimleri) önemini vurgulamaktadır. Çalışmanın sonuç kısmında, belirtilen faydalardan tam anlamıyla istifade edebilmek için dil öğretmenlerine edebi metinleri etkili bir şekilde kullanabilmeleri üzerine kapsamlı bir eğitim verilmesini önermektedir. Genel olarak değerlendirildiğinde, bu çalışma edebi metinlerin, hedef grubun özellikleri dikkate alınarak seçildiğinde ve iyi eğitilmiş öğretmenler tarafından eğitim ortamlarında etkili bir biçimde kullanıldığında, öğrencilerin sadece dilsel gelişimlerine değil aynı zamanda kişisel gelişimlerine de katkıda bulunacağını vurgulamaktadır.

Anahtar Kelimeler: Edebiyat, dil eğitimi, edebi metinler, yabancı dil eğitimi, dil becerileri

Introduction

Literature, in the most general sense, refers to “written artistic works, especially those with a high and lasting artistic value” and the word “literary” is defined as the one “connected with literature” (Cambridge advanced learner’s dictionary, 2003, p. 729). In connection with this definition, short stories, novels, poems and plays are specified as the examples of ‘literary texts’ (Takahashi, 2015). Inclusion of literature, more specifically literary texts, in second and foreign language classes has been a topic of study for many years. With the emergence of different language teaching methods and approaches, the use of literature for foreign language teaching purposes has gone through ups and downs. For instance, during the period where the Grammar Translation Method (GTM) was popular, literature was at the core of language teaching, and translation was a common classroom technique where students were asked to translate literary texts from a foreign language to the students’ mother tongue and vice versa (Larsen-Freeman, and Anderson, 2011). However, with the emergence of other language teaching methods that emphasize the importance of communication in the target language (e.g. the Direct Method, the Audiolingual Method), GTM began to fall out of favour, and so did the use of literature in language classes. It was not until around the 1980s that interest in the use of literature in foreign language classes revived again. It was then the idea began to spread that literature, different from its’ role in GTM, can contribute to the development of language skills and communicative competence (Erkaya, 2005; Pardede, 2011). Since that time, many researchers (e.g. Collie and Slater, 1987; Ghosn, 2002; Hall, 2015; Hismanoglu, 2005; Lazar, 1993; McKay, 2014; Naji, Subramaniam, and White, 2019; Sage, 1987) have emphasized the multidimensional benefits literature can bring to second and foreign language classes. Considering the significant contribution of literature to both linguistic (e.g. vocabulary, speaking, writing) and non-linguistic (e.g. raising cultural awareness) domains, this paper aims

to address the following main issues: a) important reasons to use literature in language teaching classes; b) advantages of using different literary genres in language classrooms; c) the main criteria for the selection of appropriate literary texts.

Major reasons to use literature in language teaching

Based on several researchers' work (e.g. Ghosn, 2002; Hall, 2015; Hismanoglu, 2005; Lazar, 1993; McKay, 2014; Naji et al., 2019), the major benefits that literature brings to language classes can be outlined as follows:

- Demonstrating authentic, natural language
- Developing an understanding towards different cultures
- Sharpening critical and creative thinking skills
- Contributing to personal development as a whole
- Fostering basic language skills (i.e. reading, writing, speaking, listening and other language-related areas (e.g. vocabulary, grammar))

These items are explained in detail in the section below.

Demonstrating authenticity

As defined by Richards and Schmidt (2002) in Longman dictionary of language teaching and applied linguistics, authentic materials refer to those that "contain more realistic and natural examples of language use than those found in textbooks and other specially developed teaching materials" (p. 42). This definition shows that literary texts like stories, poems, and novels are more authentic materials than those found in textbooks or other teaching materials. Literary texts are the source of quality linguistic input (Lazar, 1993). Unlike EFL coursebooks that do not go beyond the imitation of the real life events (Crystal, 1987), literary texts provide learners with the "opportunities for authentic reading" (Ghosn, 2002, p. 174). Similarly, Long (1986) states that literary works, when compared to 'fabricated texts', involve learners in real communicative activities such as 'prediction, creating a scenario, debating topics on or around a text' (p. 58). In short, literature gives readers a sense of experiencing real life events.

Raising cultural awareness

Language and culture are so closely connected to each other that it is necessary to integrate culture in second language teaching and learning (Picken, 2007). Besides being used as teaching material in language classes, literary texts also offer invaluable opportunities for learners to get to know the target culture (Hall, 2015; Lazar, 1993). In this way, they can identify the similarities and differences between their own and the target culture, and thus deepen their understanding of cultural diversity. Collie and Slater (1987) explain the significant role of literature in raising cultural awareness as follows:

It is true of course that the 'world' of a novel, play, or short story is a created one, yet it offers a full and vivid context in which characters from many social backgrounds can be depicted. A reader can discover their thoughts, feelings, customs, possessions; what they buy, believe in, fear, enjoy; how they speak and behave behind closed doors. This vivid imagined world can quickly give the foreign reader a feel for the codes and preoccupations that structure a real

society. Literature is perhaps best seen as a complement to other materials used to increase the foreign learner's insight into the country whose language is being learnt (p.4).

In brief, reading literature helps students recognize the existence of countless different cultures and as they read, they can understand that each of them is valuable and needs to be met with tolerance and respect (McKay, 2014).

Developing critical and creative thinking skills

Another benefit of using literature is that it can improve students' "higher order thinking skills, such as criticality and creativity" (Naji et al., 2019, p. 7). This can be achieved through thought-provoking, challenging activities related to literary texts. For instance, while engaging with stories, students can write and compare conflicts, opposing and paradoxical elements (e.g. two opposite characteristics) of a text, on a chart in order to analyze and aid discussion about them. Alternatively, students can retell the story from the point of view of another character as a way of improving their ability to look at an issue from a different perspective (Sage, 1987). Additionally, teachers can ask authentic questions with no pre-determined answers or with more than one possible answer, which can draw students into deeper discussions about the text. These kinds of activities can foster students' critical and multidimensional thinking skills more so than traditional language learning texts.

Contributing to personal development as a whole

By reading and analyzing literary works, students become both intellectually and emotionally involved with the content. The mutual interaction between the students and the literary text gives learners an opportunity to voice how they feel, what they think, and how their personal experience relates to the literary text that they read. Engaging with literary texts can stimulate students' mental processes (e.g. questioning, reasoning). Ghosn (2002) draws attention to the "potential power of good literature to transform, to change attitudes, and to help eradicate prejudice while fostering empathy, tolerance, and an awareness of global problems" (p. 176). Therefore, students can develop a profound understanding of themselves through questioning their thoughts and feelings during their engagement with literature. To put it simply, as Lazar (1993) explains, literature addresses the learners' "personal opinions, reactions and feelings" by engaging them "as a whole person" in the learning process (p.3). Collie and Slater (1987) state that non-literary language teaching materials are based on rules and have an analytic nature, and for this reason, personal involvement remains at a superficial level. On the other hand, when interacting with literary texts, the reader gets immersed in the work and gradually starts to "inhabit" it. Rather than focusing on each individual word or sentence, the reader begins to wonder about the events, characters' reactions, and feelings in the story (Collie and Slater, 1987, p.6). These explanations show us that literary texts can take readers on a unique journey to other lands, and so language learners, while developing their language skills, can get personally involved in reading. Whether it is bitter or sweet, everyone can find something about themselves in literature.

Fostering language skills

Students' language skills also gradually improve as they engage with literature. Through reading literary texts, students can focus on both the form and meaning of texts (Hall, 2015). They can also practice and learn lexical and grammatical structures. That is to say, they can develop many skills at the same time. The following sections explain how literature develops four primary language skills: writing, reading, listening, and speaking.

Writing skill. Harris and Mahon (1997, p. 10) define writing as "a cognitive process involving the creation of meaning in visual or written language" and they emphasize that literature can significantly stimulate writing. The use of creative writing in English language teaching (ELT) classes is getting more common around the world (Hall, 2015). Given the important role of literature for learning to write creatively, this trend is important. With regard to the use of literature in the ELT context, Saito, Y. (2015) emphasizes that there is a need to see literature as a creative experience rather than studying an ordinary text. Reading and writing come together under the umbrella of literature because reading literature offers valuable linguistic input that encourages learners to write (Hirvela, 2004). Some past studies (e.g. Chen, 2006; Hirvela, 2005; Kuze, 2015) affirm the positive effects of integrating literary texts into writing classes as they are motivating and enjoyable for students and effective in improving their language skills. Through literature, learners get the opportunity to engage with a variety of real life stories and different characters, which contributes to students' creative writing. Naji et al. (2019) give the following example of activities for creative writing while studying with literary texts:

Students could change the ending of a story, or change the context of the story, for instance, updating it to the present day or setting it in their own country, or changing things in a paragraph so that they are the exact opposite, a rainy day becoming a sunny day and so on. (p. 44).

Likewise, McKay (2014, p. 496) suggests that rewriting stories from the viewpoint of different characters, responding to the texts through "personal journals and formal essays" can be very beneficial for students' writing improvement. In a similar vein, Sage (1987) proposes different activities related to short stories such as making small changes to the ending of a story, or creating a new ending and evaluating its possible effects. These activities all have a positive impact on students' creative writing skills. As Collie and Slater (1987) state, through reading literature, language learners find it easier to remember both lexical or syntactic structures, and since literature provides learners with a rich and meaningful context to work with, they can recognize the different forms and functions of written language. This, in turn, helps them sharpen their writing skills.

Reading skill. Reading literature is like opening a door to the world, and while it can broaden your horizons, it can also improve both low and high level reading skills through active reading. Literary texts can be very useful for triggering active reading which includes "predicting, connecting, questioning, clarifying, and evaluating" (Naji et al., 2019, p. 46). Some of these components are exemplified as follows:

For instance, students could keep journals about their reading, and asked to complete comments such as 'I think X is going to happen' (prediction) or 'This character reminds me of me because...' (connecting) or 'I wonder what X meant when she said _____'. Maybe she thought _____' (questioning and clarifying) (Naji et al., 2019, p. 46).

Rather than being passive readers that wait to be spoon-fed, students, under a teacher's guidance, can actively participate in the process of reading literary works. That is to say, they can be encouraged to actively interact with the text, learn to read between the lines and grasp the intended meaning behind words and sentences, make inferences, question, criticize, discuss and evaluate the text from different perspectives. These tasks can all contribute to the development of more complex reading skills. In addition to this, literature also inspires learners to do extensive reading for the enjoyment and pleasure it gives (McKay, 2014). As Hall (2015) states, "nothing is more serious or more valuable than enjoying a good story or poem..." (p.14). Literary texts can therefore motivate learners to read more.

Listening skill. Students can improve their listening skills when they listen to their teacher reading aloud from literary texts or using recorded audio files on digital platforms (McKay, 2014). Combining literature and technology can increase the richness of these lessons. Literary texts presented through audiobooks and audio recordings are, without doubt, a source of valuable listening input for students. Hearing stories and poems from a variety of voices and accents can contribute significantly to students' listening comprehension skills. Activities asking students to listen for both general and specific information can be beneficial for literature classes. While listening to audio recordings of a literary text, students' attention can be drawn to pronunciation together with intonation, linking, stress, and emotional tone. Also, dictation activities with short stories and poems can be a fruitful exercise for developing listening skills. For instance, students can be provided with a poem with blanks in each line and they can fill in the blanks while listening to their teacher or to audio recordings. Additionally, students can listen to a short story and can put scrambled sentences into the correct order according to the flow of events in the story. Further, Naji et al. (2019) suggest "listen and draw" activities to describe characters and the setting of the events in literary texts. In brief, all of these literary-based listening activities can be used as effective tools to develop students' listening skills.

Speaking skill. Integrating literary works in second and foreign language classes can also be very helpful in developing learners' speaking skills. First, literature encourages learners to interact with each other and, in so doing, enables learners to exchange ideas, feelings, and information (Saito, A. 2015). Similarly, Sage (1987) points to the importance of asking and discussing a variety of questions related to the literary text students read. These questions give students the opportunity to express their opinions, judgments, and beliefs regarding the text, and therefore practice and improve their speaking as well. Naji et al. (2019) suggest two types of activities that can be used to improve speaking while using literary texts. The first type of activity is called "choral speaking," which refers to reading aloud poem or literary prose, which can be good practice for "pronunciation, word stress, sentence stress, and intonation" (p.45). The second type of activity is called "digital remixing" and it is used for integrating music, images, and literary text so that it motivates students to

read the text in detail in order to find harmonious visuals and sound effects. Also, roleplays based on literary texts can help students to improve their oral language performances (Moody, 1971, Sage, 1987). Another important point to mention is that engaging with literary texts can help learners improve their “sociolinguistic and pragmatic competence” so that they can question whether the language used in a specific context is appropriate or not (McKay, 2014, p. 495).

The advantages of using different genres of literature in language teaching

The advantages of using poetry in language teaching

Poetry shows us the power of words to come together to say a lot in a few words. While reading poetry, we recognize how a simple word can mean a lot when combined with the writer’s feelings and thoughts. Poetry, with its distinctive features and aesthetic value, can engage students both mentally and emotionally and can evoke deep feelings and emotional responses (Sage, 1987). It not only contributes to the development of language skills in general but also to learning metaphorical language because it is rich in figurative expressions such as “metaphor, simile; symbolism; paradox; personification, and irony” (Sage, 1987, p.14). Poems are short in length but full of meaning, and therefore they are practical to use within class time. This feature is defined by Tibbetts (1997) as the “economy of expression” (p.95). Poems also present the use of rhyme and rhythmic patterns and they give students the opportunity to learn through repetition of vocabulary and language structures (Tibbetts, 1997).

The advantages of using short stories in language teaching

Stories ranging from folk and fairy tales to fables and anecdotes are valuable sources that motivate students to read. Students are typically familiar with these types of stories because they have been brought up on them from a young age, often having been told similar stories by their grandparents and older relatives. Multiple intelligences, especially emotional intelligence, can be activated through stories such as these (Mourao, 2009). Learning strategies like “listening for general meaning; predicting; guessing meaning; hypothesising” can be improved through the use of stories (Mourao, 2009, p.18). Stories are generally composed of a clear “beginning, middle and an end” and this smooth flow motivates students with different language levels to read through to the end (Erkaya, 2005, p.5). Stories include both simple (e.g. setting, plot, character) and complex (e.g. climax, conflict, resolution) literary elements and these can be taught to students depending on their level of proficiency (Erkaya, 2005). The inclusion of stories in language classes is beneficial for the following reasons: a) practicality: stories generally have a reasonable length, and so using them as a teaching tool does not take too much time; b) stories are not very difficult for students, and so they can also handle them on their own; c) there are many different types of stories, and this makes it easier for teachers to find stories that fit students’ interests and needs (Collie and Slater, 1987). Activities related to short stories can contribute to the learners’ vocabulary, grammar and cultural knowledge. Through short stories, students can practice and learn a great number of new words and grammar structures (Sage, 1987).

The advantages of using novels in language teaching

Lazar (1993) states that "like the short story, the traditional novel involves a chronological sequence of events, linked by relations of cause and effect" (p. 89). Additionally, "in a novel there is likely to be a larger cast of characters than in a short story, the plot may be more complicated and methods of narration can sometimes be more complex" (Lazar, 1993, p. 89). Their length may seem impractical for teaching in one or two class hours but the chapters can be split up and read part by part (Collie and Slater, 1987). Through novels, students can see advanced vocabulary and grammar use in meaningful contexts. The learning activities used for novels can ask students to make hypotheses and inferences. In addition to the development of language related skills, reading novels can have positive effects on students' emotional and intellectual development (Lazar, 1990).

The advantages of using drama in language teaching

Drama is the mirror of everyday life. Through drama, the reading experience goes beyond the pages of the book and comes alive on stage. This distinctive feature makes it a valuable tool to be used for educational purposes. Drama-based activities like roleplays, improvisation, and scenarios can be a productive part of a communicative language syllabus as it enables students to translate knowledge into action. Kao and O'Neill (1998) put forward that "drama sustains interactions between students with the target language, creating a world of social roles and relations in which the learner is an active participant" (p.4). In other words, in ESL/EFL classes, drama-based activities offer a specific meaningful context in which students can actively communicate with each other in the target language by performing various roles (e.g. performing the role of a successful businessman, a helpful neighbour, an experienced gardener, a naughty grandchild or an over-protective mother). The more different the roles they play, the more they develop intellectually, personally, emotionally and socially. Moreover, the more they engage with the target language in these settings, the more they learn how to use it in different real-life situations. As a result, students practice speaking the target language and also develop pragmatic competence in the language. That is to say, they can learn when to say what to whom, which calls pragmatic knowledge into action as the roles they play change from context to context. With practice in drama-based activities, students can develop an understanding of how to say things in different contexts and recognize the difference between formal and informal language. As students realize that they can use the language to communicate their ideas, thoughts and feelings, they can build up their confidence day by day (Wessels, 1987, p.10). Drama also helps students acquire pronunciation and prosodic features such as intonation and rhythm (Wessels, 1987). In addition to these benefits, Mahoney (1997) emphasizes other outcomes of drama-based education as follows: a) Drama offers an opportunity to practice not only linguistic but also paralinguistic (e.g. body language, gestures) communication; b) Drama can help students distinguish between explicit (direct) and implicit (indirect) meaning. Furthermore, through drama, language instructors can create a multi-sensory learning environment which addresses all learning styles: visual, auditory, and kinesthetic. As a result of this, drama-based activities can promote lifelong learning.

Suggestions on the selection of appropriate literary texts

The selection of appropriate literary works for use in foreign language classes is, without a doubt, a very crucial issue. If the selected literary texts do not meet certain criteria, then there is no point in using them for instruction in very limited classroom time. While choosing the most suitable literary work for a specific group of language learners, it is essential to carefully consider the target groups' "needs, interests, cultural background and language level" (Collie and Slater, 1987, p.6). In line with this, at the beginning of a course, language instructors can do a needs analysis to understand what their students actually need. For instance, literary texts can be used to teach or practice a particular grammar structure, or they can be used to highlight specific parts of speech like adjectives, adverbs, and so on. When students see that the things they do fulfill their language learning purposes and needs, they can become more motivated. Also, the topic of the literary text needs to be appealing, engaging, and interesting for the target group, otherwise, they may easily lose their motivation for reading it. The instructor must also ensure that the literary work is at an appropriate level of difficulty for the students. McKay (2014) suggests instructors choose texts "that are not too difficult for the students on either a linguistic or conceptual level" (p. 491). This is because if the chosen literary material has a very complicated vocabulary and syntax for the target group, then students may be discouraged from continued reading. Similarly, if the concepts mentioned in the text are too abstract for students to grasp, they may develop a sense of failure. A literary text that is appropriate for advanced learners may not be appropriate for pre-intermediate level students, and vice versa. With regard to this, Moody (1971) states that "...no student can ever be induced to experience enjoyment of a literary experience beyond his range" and suggests that "... all the works of literature in the world could be graded in terms of their simplicity or complexity, their remoteness or their accessibility" (p. 15). Therefore, unfamiliar vocabulary and difficult sentence structures can be an obstacle between literary text and students, and this obstacle needs to be minimized (Sage, 1987). Finally, during the selection process, the role of culture in literary texts requires great attention as well. It would be beneficial to choose literary works that present cultural objects and cultural practices in a comprehensible way. Otherwise, explaining all of the complex cultural elements takes too much time and students can get bored while trying to understand the cultural meanings behind each expression. Contemporaneity and universality of the texts are also very important factors (Ghosn, 2002, Sage, 1987). Ghosn (2002) suggests that instructors choose contemporary works that reflect the current and common cultural values, attitudes, practices and traditions of a place, rather than old-fashioned ones which present old cultural traditions that may confuse young readers. Related to this issue, Tseng (2010) researched students' perceptions of literature and found that students prefer to read contemporary literary works like movie novels, fantasy, and realistic fiction rather than classic literature. Students may lose interest when they encounter ancient or uncommon words and historical events of the distant past in literary texts and therefore selecting stories with contemporary events and with more familiar words will be more effective in keeping the students' attention alive (Sage, 1987). Additionally, the length of the text is another factor that needs to be considered (Lazar, 1993). If the target text is too long, then it will be

difficult to cover it properly within limited class hours. Therefore, choosing texts with appropriate length is another factor that needs to be kept in mind as texts are selected.

Deciding how to use literary texts in lessons is as important as which texts to choose. Therefore, in light of suggestions offered by various researchers (e.g. Collie and Slater, 1987; Ghosn, 2002, Lazar, 1993; McKay, 2014; Naji et al., 2019; Sage, 1987), the following questions are formulated so that teachers can use them as a guideline while deciding how to choose and how to use literary texts in their lessons:

- What genre (e.g. short story, poem) do my students prefer to read most?
- Is the text appropriate for my students' level in terms of vocabulary, grammar, and sentence structure?
- Is the language of the text clear and understandable?
- Is the text appropriate for my students' age? (Consider young, adolescent or adult learners' characteristics).
- Do I need to give too much background information about the text (e.g. historical background, biography of the author)?
- Is the text culturally appropriate for my students? To what extent are the students familiar with the cultural elements in the text? Are the cultural concepts too difficult to understand?
- Is the topic of the text interesting and appealing for students?
- Does it meet the language learning needs of my students?
- How long is the text? How much class time should be devoted to the text and each activity?
- What kind of audio-visual aids (e.g. illustrations, charts, graphics, background music, videos, recordings) can I use to facilitate students' comprehension of the text?
- Can I use technology-based formats (e.g. mobile apps, digital stories) while introducing the text to the students?
- How can I present the text in a way that all language skills can be developed?
- What kind of activities can I use before, during, and after they read the text?
- How can I help my students actively engage with the text and participate in the lesson? What kind of activities can I use to keep their attention and motivation high?
- Can I use this text effectively to stimulate my students' imagination and creativity? In what ways can I contribute to my students' critical thinking and interpretive skills?
- How can I use the text in a way that addresses different learning styles that students possess: visual, auditory, and kinesthetic?
- What kind of activities can I use to address different types of intelligence (e.g. spatial intelligence, interpersonal intelligence, intrapersonal intelligence, musical intelligence)?

Conclusion

This paper presented the valuable contributions that literature offers to second and foreign language teaching and learning processes. Literary texts, when selected carefully, can add both to the linguistic and non-linguistic growth of students.

Therefore, training teachers on the use of literary materials in ESL/EFL classes seems to be very important (Hall, 2015; Sage, 1987). Teachers' perceptions towards the inclusion of literature in language classes and their competency in using it are crucial factors that require attention. For instance, Saka (2018) carried out interviews with pre-service English teachers to find out their perceptions about the use of literature in teaching English. The findings revealed that even though these prospective teachers were well aware of the benefits of literature, they did not feel that they had enough competency to use it. Likewise, Zengin, Basal and Yukselir (2019), conducted a study with English language teachers and reported that the majority of the teachers held positive beliefs about using literature in language classes and indicated that the inclusion of literature can contribute to the students' cultural awareness as well as develop language skills (e.g. reading, writing). Only a few teachers reported the opposite and the researchers deduced that this may have resulted from teachers' insufficient knowledge of how to use literary works in their classes as well as other reasons like their own educational background. As these studies show, teachers may not feel qualified enough to use literary materials in their classes (Paran, 1998). For this reason, if language teachers receive comprehensive pre- and in-service training on the use of literature, the benefits that literary texts bring to the classes can double or even triple.

Another important consideration is that students' perceptions about literature are as important as teachers' perceptions. Therefore, when integrating literature into language classes, students' ideas, needs, interests need to be considered. Evaluating the usefulness of a literary text from the students' viewpoint is crucial. For instance, Tevdovska (2016) conducted a study to identify EFL students' attitudes toward using literary texts while learning English. In that study, the students were found to be willing to read contemporary literary texts and mostly preferred to read novels and stories rather than poems. Most of the students reported that the complex language in some literary texts is a downside of their use and preferred to be provided with some background information about the culture, author and so on. They also indicated that visual materials (e.g. videos) related to the text helped them understand the text better. This study is a good example of how necessary it is to get students' opinions during the learning process. Every learning context is unique, so getting students' opinions from the very beginning of the learning process can help maximize the benefits of using literary texts.

Finally, teachers can make the use of literature in their teaching more motivating and enjoyable by using different techniques. In order to enrich the learning process, literature can be presented to students in various ways like picturebooks, graphic novels, story apps, and so on (see Bland, 2019). Technology offers a great number of useful online resources for instructors. Naji et al. (2019) explain that thanks to electronic literature, language learners can access numerous technology-based literary forms and identify new literary formats like "mobile apps, virtual and augmented reality, digital poetry, text novels, and interactive fiction" (pp. 99-100). The way the literary works are presented can have a great effect on students' learning, and so taking advantage of technology in this process can be of great use.

References

- Bland, J. (2019). Learning through literature. In S. Garton and F. Copland (Eds.), *The Routledge handbook of teaching English to young learners* (pp. 269-287). New York: Routledge.
- Cambridge advanced learner's dictionary* (2003). Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press.
- Chen, Y-M. (2006). Using children's literature for reading and writing stories. *Asian EFL Journal*, 8(4), 210-232.
- Collie, J., and Slater, S. (1987). *Literature in the language classroom. A resource book of ideas and activities*. Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press.
- Crystal, D. (1987). *Child language, learning and linguistics*. London: Edward Arnold.
- Erkaya, O. R. (2005). Benefits of using short stories in the EFL context. *Asian EFL Journal*, 8, 1-13.
- Ghosn, I. K. (2002). Four good reasons to use literature in primary school ELT. *ELT Journal*, 56(2), 172-179. <https://doi.org/10.1093/elt/56.2.172>
- Hall, G. (2015). Recent developments in uses of literature in language teaching. In M. Teranishi, Y. Saito and K. Wales (Eds.), *Literature and language learning in the EFL classroom* (pp 13-25). Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan. https://doi.org/10.1057/9781137443663_2
- Harris, J., and Mahon, T. (1997). Writing and the use of literature in the English classroom. In P. Falvey and P. Kennedy (Eds.), *Learning language through literature: A sourcebook for teachers of English in Hong Kong* (pp. 9-27). Hong Kong: Hong Kong University Press.
- Hirvela, A. (2004). *Connecting reading and writing in second language writing instruction*. Ann Arbor, MI: The University of Michigan Press. <https://doi.org/10.3998/mpub.23736>
- Hirvela, A. (2005). ESL students and the use of literature in composition courses, *Teaching English in the Two-Year College*, 33(1), 70-77.
- Hismanoglu, M. (2005). Teaching English through literature. *Journal of Language and Linguistic Studies*, 1(1), 53-66.
- Kao, S.-M., and O'Neill, C. (1998). *Words into worlds: Learning a second language through process drama*. Stamford, Conn: Ablex.
- Kuze, K. (2015). Using short stories in university composition classrooms. In M. Teranishi, Y. Saito, and K. Wales (Eds.), *Literature and language learning in the EFL classroom* (pp. 182-196). Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan. https://doi.org/10.1057/9781137443663_13
- Larsen-Freeman, D., and Anderson, M. (2011). *Techniques and principles in language teaching* (3rd ed.). New York, NY: Oxford University Press.
- Lazar, G. (1990). Using novels in the language-learning classroom. *ELT Journal*, 44(3), 204-214. <https://doi.org/10.1093/elt/44.3.204>
- Lazar, G. (1993). *Literature and language teaching: A guide for teachers and trainers*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press. <https://doi.org/10.1017/CBO9780511733048>
- Long, M. (1986). A feeling for language: The multiple values of teaching literature. In C. Brumfit, and R. Carter (Eds.), *Literature and language teaching* (pp. 42-59). Oxford: Oxford University Press.

- Mahoney, D. (1997). Drama in the classroom. In P. Falvey, and P. Kennedy (Eds.), *Learning language through literature: A sourcebook for teachers of English in Hong Kong* (pp. 117- 133). Hong Kong: Hong Kong University Press.
- McKay, S. (2014). Literature as content for language teaching. In M. Celce-Murcia, D. M. Brinton, and M. A. Snow (Eds.), *Teaching English as a second or foreign language* (4th ed.) (pp. 488-500). Boston, MA: National Geographic Learning/Heinle Cengage Learning.
- Moody, H. L. B. (1971). *The teaching of literature*. London: Longman.
- Mourao, S. (2009). Using stories in the primary classroom. In *BritLit: Using literature in EFL classrooms* (pp. 17-26). London: British Council. Retrieved 28 December 2019.
https://www.teachingenglish.org.uk/sites/teacheng/files/pub_BritLit_elt.pdf
- Naji, J., Subramaniam, G., and White, G. (2019). *New approaches to literature for language learning*. Switzerland: Palgrave Macmillan.
<https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-030-15256-7>
- Paran, A (1998). Helping learners to create and own literary meaning in the ELT classroom. *Ideas: The APIGA Magazine*, 1, 6-9.
- Pardede, P. (2011). Using short stories to teach language skills. *Journal of English Teaching*, 1(1), 14-27. <https://doi.org/10.33541/jet.v1i1.49>
- Picken, J. D. (2007). *Literature, metaphor, and the foreign language learner*. Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan. <https://doi.org/10.1057/9780230591608>
- Richards, J. C., and Schmidt, R. (2002). *Longman dictionary of language teaching and applied linguistics* (3rd ed.). London, UK: Longman, Pearson Education.
- Sage, H. (1987). *Incorporating literature in ESL instruction*. New Jersey: Prentice-Hall.
- Saito, A. (2015). Bridging the gap between L1 education and L2 education. In M. Teranishi, Y. Saito, and K. Wales (Eds.), *Literature and language learning in the EFL classroom* (pp. 41-60). Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan.
https://doi.org/10.1057/9781137443663_4
- Saito, Y. (2015). From reading to writing: Creative stylistics as a methodology for bridging the gap between literary appreciation and creative writing in ELT. In M. Teranishi, Y. Saito, and K. Wales (Eds.), *Literature and language learning in the EFL classroom* (pp. 61-74). Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan.
https://doi.org/10.1057/9781137443663_5
- Saka, F. (2018). Views of pre-service English teachers on the role of literature in EFL classes. *International Journal of Languages' Education and Teaching*, 6(2), 138-148.
- Takahashi, K. (2015). Literary texts as authentic materials for language learning: The current situation in Japan. In M. Teranishi, Y. Saito, and K. Wales (Eds.), *Literature and language learning in the EFL classroom* (pp 26-40). Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan. https://doi.org/10.1057/9781137443663_3
- Tevdovska, E. S. (2016). Literature in ELT setting: Students attitudes and preferences towards literary texts. *Procedia - Social and Behavioral Sciences*, 232, 161-169.
<https://doi.org/10.1016/j.sbspro.2016.10.041>

- Tibbetts, D. (1997). Poetry writing and language learning. In P. Falvey, and P. Kennedy (Eds.), *Learning language through literature: A sourcebook for teachers of English in Hong Kong* (pp. 93-106). Hong Kong: Hong Kong University Press.
- Tseng, F. (2010). Introducing literature to an EFL classroom: Teacher's presentations and students' perceptions. *Journal of Language Teaching and Research*, 1(1), 53-65. <https://doi.org/10.4304/jltr.1.1.53-65>
- Wessels, C. (1987). *Drama*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Zengin, B., Basal, A., and Yukselir, C. (2019). Investigation into the perceptions of English teachers and instructors on the use of literature in English language teaching. *The Reading Matrix: An International Online Journal*, 19(1), 155- 166.

Araştırmanın Etik Taahhüt Metni

Yapılan bu çalışmada bilimsel, etik ve alıntı kurallarına uyulduğu; toplanan veriler üzerinde herhangi bir tahrifatın yapılmadığı, karşılaşılabilecek tüm etik ihlallerde "Cumhuriyet Uluslararası Eğitim Dergisi ve Editörünün" hiçbir sorumluluğunun olmadığı, tüm sorumluluğun Sorumlu Yazara ait olduğu ve bu çalışmanın herhangi başka bir akademik yayın ortamına değerlendirme için gönderilmemiş olduğu sorumlu yazar tarafından taahhüt edilmiştir.

Author's Biodata/ Yazar Bilgileri

Hatice Okyar currently works as an assistant professor at Necmettin Erbakan University, School of Foreign Languages, Konya, Turkey. Her research interests include foreign language education, language learning strategies and language teaching methodology.

Hatice OKYAR Necmettin Erbakan Üniversitesi Yabancı Diller Yüksekokulunda Dr. Öğretim Üyesi olarak görev yapmaktadır. Araştırma ilgi alanları arasında yabancı dil eğitimi, dil öğrenme stratejileri ve dil öğretim metodolojisi yer almaktadır.