

3-20-2019

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Recommended Citation

DINALIEVA, Aliya Teacher (2019) "MODERN VIEWS ON TEACHING LANGUAGE THROUGH LITERATURE," *Philology Matters*: Vol. 2019 : Iss. 1 , Article 20.

DOI: 10.36078/987654337

Available at: <https://uzjournals.edu.uz/philolm/vol2019/iss1/20>

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Aliya DINALIEVA

MODERN VIEWS ON TEACHING LANGUAGE THROUGH LITERATURE

Мақола асосий тил кўникмалари (ўқиш, ёзиш, тинглаш ва нутқ)ни ўргатишда ҳозирда кенг тарқалган усул сифатида адабий матнлардан фойдаланиш билан бирга, хорижий тилларни ўрганувчилар учун тил ва мулоқот кўникмаларини оширишда адабиётнинг қийматини баҳолашга бағишланган. Мазкур илмий тадқиқот адабиёт дарсларида коммуникация малакаларини самарали ўқитиш усулларини аниқлашга қаратилган бўлиб, амалий машғулотларда адабий матнни татбиқ этиш орқали нутқ кўникмаларини ривожлантириш учун турли усуллар ва методларни қўллашнинг аниқ ўзига хос хусусиятларини ўрганади.

Калит сўзлар: ақлий ҳужум, Вени диаграммаси, ақлий харита, социолингвистик, вербал ва невербал жиҳатлар, адабий оқимлар.

Данная статья посвящается исследованию использования художественных текстов в качестве популярного метода обучения базовым языковым навыкам (например, чтению, письму, слушанию и говорению) и содействию восприятия потенциальных ценностей литературы в повышении языковых навыков и навыков общения тех, кто изучает иностранный язык. Исследование направлено на поиск путей эффективного обучения навыкам общения на уроках литературы, а также в статье анализируются и изучаются специфические особенности использования различных методов и видов деятельности для развития навыков говорения путем работы с художественных текстом на практических занятиях английского языка.

Ключевые слова: мозговой штурм, диаграмма Вени, карта интеллекта, социолингвистический, вербальный и невербальный аспекты, литературные течения.

The current paper aims at emphasizing the use of literature as a popular technique for teaching both basic language skills (i.e. reading, writing, listening and speaking) and supporting the potential values of literature in enhancing language and communication skills for the language learners in our times. The research is in its quest for the issues on how to effectively teach communication skills in a literature class as well as how to develop students' inspirations in studying literature. Moreover, the work studies specific features of the use of different techniques and activities to develop speaking skills by using literature texts at practical English lessons.

Key words: ice breaker, Venn Diagrams, Mind Maps, sociolinguistic, verbal/nonverbal aspects, literary movements.

The use of literature as a technique for teaching both basic language skills (i.e. reading, writing, listening and speaking) and language areas (i.e. vocabulary, grammar and pronunciation) is very popular within the field of foreign language learning and teaching nowadays. Moreover, we should stress the role of literature as

a basic component and source of authentic texts of the language curriculum rather than an ultimate aim of English instruction has been gaining momentum. Among language educators, there has been a hot debate as to how, when, where, and why literature should be incorporated in ESL/EFL curriculum. Vigorous discussion of how literature and ESL/EFL instruction can work together and interact for the benefit of students and teachers has led to the flourishing of interesting ideas, learning, and has improved recommendations for all. A lot of teachers consider the use of literature in language teaching as an interesting and worthy concern.

ESL/EFL teachers should adopt a dynamic, student-centered approach toward comprehension of a literary work. In reading lessons, most discussions begin 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 characters, a 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 and 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 of the work. The third level, the personal/evaluative level stimulates students to think imaginatively about the work and provokes their problem-solving abilities. Discussion deriving from such questions can be the foundation for oral and written activities.

Literature can be a powerful and motivating source for writing in ESL/EFL, both as a model and as a subject matter. Literature as a model occurs when students' writing becomes closely similar to the original work or clearly imitates its content, theme, organization and style. However, when students' writing exhibits original thinking like interpretation or analysis, or when it emerges from, or is creatively stimulated by, reading, literature serves as a subject matter. Literature houses in immense variety of themes to write on in terms of guided, free, controlled and other types of writing. In order to define clearly the importance of using different genres to language teaching we give below a list of some of them as an example.

Benefits of Using Poetry in Language Teaching

Poetry can pave the way for learning and teaching of basic language skills. It is a metaphor that is the most prominent connection between learning and poetry. Because most poetry consciously or unconsciously makes use of a metaphor as one of its primary tools, poetry offers a significant learning process. There are at least two learning benefits that can be derived from studying poetry:

- appreciation of the writer's composition process, which students gain by studying poems by components;
- developing sensitivity for words and discoveries that may later grow into a deeper interest and greater analytical ability.

Saraz also explains the educational benefits of poetry as follows:

- provides readers with a different viewpoint towards language use by going beyond the known usages and rules of grammar, syntax and vocabulary;
- triggers unmotivated readers owing to being so open to explorations and different interpretations; evokes feelings and thoughts in heart and in mind;
- makes students familiar with figures of speech (i.e. simile, metaphor, irony, personification, imagery, etc.) due to their being a part of daily language use.

As Çubukçu mentions, poetry is a rewarding and enjoyable experience with the properties of rhyming and rhythm both of which convey “love and appreciation for the sound and power of language.” At this juncture, it can be stated that students become familiar with the supra segmental aspects of the target language, such as stress, pitch, juncture, intonation by studying poetry.

Through poetry, students can also study the semiotic elements in the target language. Semiotic elements constitute a cultural training as well. As Hiller states, poems should be seen as hyper signs of which constituents, “semiotic signifiers”, come together in their common relationship and lead to the “symbolic level” and this level is the one inclined to be signified in a poem. Moreover, poetry employs language to evoke and exalt special qualities of life, and suffices readers with feelings. It is particularly lyric poetry which is based on feelings and provides still another emotional benefit. Poetry is one of the most effective and powerful transmitters of culture. Poems comprise so many cultural elements – allusions, vocabulary, idioms, tones, which are not easy to translate into another language.

Benefits of Using Short Stories in Language Teaching.

Short fiction is a supreme resource for observing not only the language but life itself. In short fiction, characters act out all real and symbolic acts people carry out in daily lives, and do so in a variety of registers and tones. The world of short fiction both mirrors and illuminates human lives. The inclusion of short fiction in the ESL/EFL curriculum offers the following educational benefits:

- makes students’ reading tasks easier due to being simple and short when compared with the other literary genres;
- enlarges the advanced level of readers’ worldviews about different cultures and different groups of people;
- provides more creative, encrypt, challenging texts that require personal exploration supported with prior knowledge for advanced level readers;
- motivates learners to read due to being an authentic material;
- offers a world of wonders and a world of mystery;
- gives students a chance to use their creativity;
- promotes critical thinking skills;
- facilitates teaching a foreign culture (i.e. serves as a valuable instrument in attaining cultural knowledge of the selected community;
- makes students feel comfortable and free;
- helps students coming from various backgrounds communicate with each other because of its universal language;

- helps students to go beyond the surface meaning and dive into underlying meanings;
- acts as a perfect vehicle to help students understand the positions of themselves as well as the others by transferring these gained knowledge to their own world.

In brief, the use of a short story seems to be a very helpful technique in today's foreign language classes. As it is short, it makes students' reading task and the teacher's coverage easier. An important feature of short fiction is its being universal. To put it differently, students all over the world have experienced stories and can relate to them. Moreover, short fiction, like all other types of literature, makes contribution to the development of cognitive analytical abilities by bringing the whole self to bear on a compressed account of a situation in a single place and moment.

Benefits of Using Drama in Language Teaching

Using drama in a language classroom is a good source for a language teaching. It is through the use of drama that learners become familiar with grammatical structures in contexts and also learn how to use the language to express, control and inform. The use of drama raises students' awareness towards the target language and culture. In this context, the use of drama as a tool rather than an end gains importance in teaching a foreign language. Yet, there is one obvious danger: cultural imposition should be severely avoided since it results in the loss of the language ego and the native language identity in many cases. To put it differently, any language learning should be culture-free but entirely not culture-biased. For this reason, the new language and the context of the drama should fuse into a language learning process with high interest, relevance and enjoyment. Learners should make use of drama to promote their comprehension of life experiences, reflect on particular circumstances and make sense of their extra-linguistic world in a deeper way. The educational benefits of drama, according to Lenore, are as follows:

- stimulates the imagination and promotes creative thinking;
- develops critical thinking skills;
- promotes language development;
- heightens effective listening skills;
- strengthens comprehension and learning retention by involving the senses as an integral part of the learning process;
- increases empathy and awareness of others;
- fosters peer respect and group cooperation;
- reinforces positive self-concept;
- provides teachers with a fresh perspective on teaching.

Some other educational benefits of using drama in a foreign language class can be listed as follows:

- bringing authenticity into the classroom;

- exposing the learners to the target culture as well as the social problems a society may be undergoing;
- increasing creativity, originality, sensitivity, fluency, flexibility, emotional stability, cooperation, and examination of moral attitudes, while developing communication skills and appreciation of literature;
- helping learners improve their level of competence with respect to their receptive and productive skills;
- providing a solid basis for learners to bridge the gap between their receptive and productive skills;
- offering students the space and time to develop new ideas and insights in a range of contexts;
- enabling students to develop new understandings and forms of knowing not accessible in other more traditional ways of learning.

In other words, the use of drama seems to be an effective technique in today's communication-based, student-centered foreign language teaching. Since it is an authentic material, it helps students to promote their comprehension of the verbal/nonverbal aspects of the target language they are trying to master. Particularly, teachers, who wish to make language learning more colorful, motivating and interesting, can make use of drama in their language classes. Since drama is the reenactments of social events, students improve their personality and code of behavior. Thus, they can achieve more meaningful and realistic teaching from which students can benefit to a great extent.

Benefits of Using Novels in Language Teaching

The use of a novel is a beneficial technique for mastering not only linguistic system but also life in relation to the target language. In a novel, characters reflect what people really perform in their daily lives. Novels not only portray but also enlighten human lives. Using a novel in a foreign language class offers the following educational benefits:

- develops the advanced level readers' knowledge about different cultures and different groups of people;
- increases students' motivation to read owing to being an authentic material,
- offers real life / real life like settings;
- gives students an opportunity to make use of their creativity;
- improves critical thinking skills;
- paves the way for teaching the target language culture;
- enables students to go beyond what is written and dive into what is meant.

C.A. Helton, J. Asamani and E.D. Thomas expound the educational benefits of novels as follows:

- stimulates their imagination;
- helps students to identify the emotions of the characters so that they can learn how others cope with situations and problems similar to their own experiences;

- helps them master the skills that will enable them to acquire information, process this knowledge, identify problems, formulate alternatives, and arrive at meaningful, thoughtful, effective decisions and solutions;
- develops oral and written language skills,
- serves as a springboard for a multitude of holistic learning and critical thinking activities beginning with basic comprehension and writing;
- presents a unique way of teaching reading by getting students involved and excited about the reading process;
- motivates students to become a lifelong reader.

When selecting a novel to be used in the foreign language class, the language teacher should pay attention to whether the novel has an intriguing story that will be of interest to the entire class. Themes and settings captivating their imagination and exploring the human condition should be included in the nature of the selected novels. A novel should have a powerful, fast-paced plot and interesting, well delineated, memorable characters. The content of the novel should be suitable to students' cognitive and emotional levels. Specific themes and concepts being developed in class should also be incorporated within the novel.

When assessing comprehension, teachers may employ novel tests requiring students to develop the sub-skills of a written language like spelling, handwriting, grammar, and punctuation. Essay type tests written by teachers help students to gradually improve their skills in writing and organizing material into paragraphs with acceptable sentence structure.

Tests are made up of not only fact-based questions serving as a basis of evaluating comprehension but also open-ended questions developing critical thinking abilities. The open-ended questions enable students to predict outcomes, make comparisons and contrasts, and draw conclusions. Class discussions of each novel event should comprise the main idea and supporting details, including who, what, when, where, and how. Details of various social issues such as sexual harrasment and humiliation, which are often an integral part of the plot, can provoke an interesting debate. Discussions can also facilitate vocabulary development.

Thus, the use of a novel is a very beneficial technique in today's foreign language classes. If selected carefully, using a novel makes students' reading lesson motivating, interesting and entertaining. Though many students find reading a novel written in a target language difficult, boring, unmotivating, a novel is a very effective way of building vocabulary and developing reading comprehension skills. It is through reading that students broaden their horizons, become familiar with other cultures, and hence develop their intercultural communicative competence, learning how to view the world from different perspectives. The result will be the possession of critical thinking and writing.

For many language learners, the ideal way to increase their understanding of verbal/nonverbal aspects of communication in the country within which that language is spoken – a visit or an extended stay – is just not probable. For such learners, literary works, such as novels, plays, short stories, etc. facilitate understanding

how communication takes place in that country. Though the world of a novel, a play, or a short story is an imaginary one, it presents a full and colorful setting in which characters from many social/regional backgrounds can be described. A reader can discover the way the characters in such literary works see the world outside (i.e. their thoughts, feelings, customs, traditions, possessions; what they buy, believe in, fear, enjoy; how they speak and behave in different settings. This colorful created world can quickly help a foreign learner to feel, percept the codes and preoccupations that shape a real society through visual literacy of semiotics. Literature is perhaps best regarded as a complement to other materials used to develop a foreign learner's understanding of the country the language of which is being learned. Also, literature adds a lot to the cultural grammar of learners.

Literature provides learners with a wide range of individual lexical or syntactic items. Students become familiar with many features of the written language, reading a substantial and contextualized body of texts. They learn about the syntax and discourse functions of sentences, the variety of possible structures, different ways of connecting ideas, which develop and enrich their own writing skills. Students also become more productive and adventurous when they begin to perceive the richness and diversity of the language they try to learn and begin to make use of some of that potential themselves. Thus, they improve their communicative and cultural competence in the authentic richness, naturalness of the authentic texts.

Literature can be useful in the language learning process owing to the personal involvement it fosters in the reader. Once students read a literary text, they begin to inhabit the text. They are drawn into the text. Understanding the meanings of lexical items or phrases becomes less significant than pursuing the development of the story. Students become enthusiastic to find out what happens as events unfold via the climax; they feel close to certain characters and share their emotional responses. This can have beneficial effects upon the whole language learning process. At this juncture, the prominence of the selection of a literary text in relation to the needs, expectations, and interests, language level of students is evident. In this process, they can remove the identity crisis and develop into an extrovert.

The cultural model views a literary text as a product. This means that it is treated as a source of information about the target culture. It is the most traditional approach, often used at university courses on literature. The cultural model will examine a social, political and historical background of a text, literary movements and genres. There is no specific language work done on a text. This approach tends to be quite a teacher-centered.

The language model aims at being more learner-centered. As learners proceed through a text, they pay attention to the way a language is used. They come to grips with the meaning and increase their general awareness of English. Within this model of studying literature, a teacher can choose to focus on general grammar and vocabulary (the same way that these are presented in course-books, for example)

or use stylistic analysis. Stylistic analysis involves the close study of linguistic features of the text to enable students to make meaningful interpretations of the text – it aims at helping learners read and study literature more competently.

The personal growth model is also a process-based approach and tries to be more learner-centered. This model encourages learners to draw on their own opinions, feelings and personal experiences. Its goal is to achieve an interaction between the text and the reader in English, helping readers make the language more memorable. Learners are encouraged to “make the text their own”. This model recognizes the immense power that literature can have to move people and attempts to use that in the classroom.

Apart from the above mentioned reasons for using literature in a foreign language class, one of the main functions of literature is its sociolinguistic richness. The use of a language changes from one social group to another. Likewise, it changes from one geographical location to another. A person speaks differently in different social contexts like school, hospital, police station and theatre (i.e. formal, informal, casual, frozen, intimate speech styles). The language changes from one profession to another (i.e. doctors, engineers, economists use different terminology). To put it differently, since literature provides students with a wide range of language varieties like sociolects, regional dialects, jargon, idiolects, etc., it develops their sociolinguistic competence in the target language.

Hence, incorporating literature into a foreign language teaching program, as a powerful source, for reflecting the sociolinguistic aspects of the target language gains importance.

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