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TEACHING LITERATURE TO DEVELOP YOUNG LEARNERS’ BASIC LANGUAGE SKILLS AND LANGUAGE AREA

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For the past few decades a remarkable revival of interest in literature in language courses has been noticed. Literature is claimed that has created a fresh and impressive atmosphere in which never before have literary texts been as highly regarded as one of the most valuable resources available in EFL classrooms (Gasparov, 2010).

However, while teaching English to students various factors are considered when selecting and grading content, such as the age and conceptual level of the learners, their needs and interests, their language level and previous language-learning experience, and the degree of difficulty and challenge of the language and activities.

The aim of the research

The use of literature at the lessons aims at the development of students’ basic language skills through language area by establishing and maintaining the rapport through discussing the topics of interest via exchange of information, ideas, opinions, attitudes, feelings, experiences and plans. Moreover, the teaching of language skills are obtained through different genres of literature (i.e. poetry, short fiction, drama and novel). Hence, some problems are encountered by language teachers within the area of teaching English through literature i.e. lack of preparation in the area of literature teaching, absence of clear-cut objectives defining the role of literature in EFL classroom, lack of background and training in literature among EFL teachers, lack of pedagogically-designed appropriate materials that can be used by language teachers in a classroom context. All these issues predetermined the object of the research as the use of short stories, poems, novels, dramas, lyrics in developing learners basic language skills for communication.

The results of investigation

It is accepted that the languages learning area (LLA) identifies four interdependent and inter-related strands that describe the ways in which learners communicate in the target language. To make the communication effective and make students aware of culture as well it is advisable to introduce literature in the classroom suggesting students’ social and cultural participation in which students solve a problem, make arrangements, make decisions with others and transact to obtain public information. But initially it is assumable that language work can range from basic vocabulary sets related a definite topic or can act as a springboard to lead on to quite a sophisticated project work to involve children to integrate the basic language skills (Palmer, 1998). An appropriate selection of a storybook that is accessible, useful and relevant for students learning English should be carefully organized to raise children’s awareness in the use of vocabulary and grammar through literature.

While reading literature various activities can be suggested for the ELT classroom. It is necessary to substitute familiar words for the more unfamiliar ones; certain keywords, even if they are a little unfamiliar are prefer able to be retained for its stylistic impact. Here the use of pictures makes its meaning clear; sometimes the rephrase of idioms and ideas in clearer language can help students changes the meanings of words slightly but emphasizes the story’s theme; The use of more examples from the text makes the meaning of the story clearer.

Students can also check grammar tenses by reading samples introduced in the EFL/ESL classroom. The story may use several structures but you may wish to emphasize one or reduce the number of structures; to check word order. In stories, the word order sometimes differs from everyday use to create a more
dramatic effect. A teacher will need to decide whether the word order is confusing for the pupils or whether the original effect should be kept.

The story introduced at FL/SL Literature classes enables the students to check their writing skills following the coherence and cohesion consequently. Thus, a long sentence may need shortening by splitting it into two sentences. You may have to add other words or mime actions to make the meaning more explicit. In addition, attention must be paid to time reference and the sequence of events, whether they are organized clearly or need to be reinforced by time markers such as first, then, the next day, etc. Also, care must be taken to the way ideas are linked and explained. In some cases it is possible to leave out some of the characters or events to reduce the length of the story without spoiling the overall effect. Adapting the text or input a teacher can also simplify the pupils’ response or output. The use of literature in the EFL classroom suggest activities that must be carefully selected to cater for children’s linguistic, cognitive and educational needs. A good example of it is introducing animals in the classroom. It is possible to practice students’ listening and speaking as well as reading and writing skills. The following activities are useful in practicing students’ listening and speaking skills:

**Listening to improve general listening attitude**

This includes listening for enjoyment, listening to improve the concentration span, or listening to develop the memory. Various listening games to prepare pupils for listening to longer texts are useful here. These can be listening to spoken instructions and following them.

**What’s missing?** Attach the colour cards to the board. Allow children a few minutes to look at them and then ask them to close their eyes. Remove a colour. Tell pupils to open their eyes and ask: ‘What’s missing?’ To make this game more difficult, remove two or three colour cards at a time. This game can also be played as a team game.

**Look, listen and repeat.** This technique is used to introduce new vocabulary and characters in the stories. The teacher shows a picture, says the word and pupils repeat. ‘Look! An elephant. Repeat!’ When the teacher is satisfied with the pupils’ pronunciations/he will move on to another word. Once several words have been introduced, the teacher can check by asking, ‘What’s this?’ and pupils repeat the words.

**Repeat if it’s true.** Put the cards on the board. Point to one and say the color, e.g. ‘red/It’s red’. If you have said the correct colour, children repeat it. If not, they stay silent.

**Listen and perform actions/follow instructions.** This kind of activity is used with action songs, rhymes or games such as ‘Blind Man’s Buff’ or ‘What’s the Time, Mr Wolf?’ Another useful listening activity is when the learner is asked to trace a route on a plan or map following directions ‘left’, ‘right’, ‘next to’, ‘first’, ‘second’, ‘third’, etc. If the children find this very difficult to do in their mother tongue, do not attempt it in English.

**Listen and hold up.** Distribute colour cards to pupils. If possible, make enough for all the pupils to have one each. Call out colours at random, asking children holding the corresponding card to hold it up. Alternatively, they could come and stand in line at the front of the class as you call out the colours. You could then extend this game as follows: ‘Red sit down!’ ‘Blue turn around!’ ‘Red stand up!’ etc.

**Listen and draw/colour.** Picture dictation is often used to help children focus on key nouns and on adjectives that describe colour, size, shape and so on. The picture can be completely drawn or can have missing items that the learners add as they listen.

**Listening to develop various aspects of language.** This includes listening to improve pronunciation of sounds, stress, rhythm, and intonation, as well as becoming familiar with new words and structural patterns.

**Listen and discriminate.** In this kind of activity you focus the learners’ attention on pronunciation features, such as listening for words that rhyme, or on selecting phrases that have the same rhythmic pattern or do gap-filling where pupils listen and write in the words. Children can also listen out for specific words in a story and tick off those words when they hear.

**Listen and underline words that rhyme.**

Brown Bear Brown Bear What do you see?
I see a red bird looking at me.
Red Bird Red Bird What do you see?
I see a yellow duck looking at me.

As for developing pupil’s reading and writing skills ESL / EFL teachers should adopt a dynamic, student-centered approach toward comprehension of a literary work. In a 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. 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. The skill of reading could be either reading aloud or reading comprehension. Reading aloud aims at recognizing the alphabetical letters and relating them to their sounds. This kind of reading is usually practiced by beginners who want to master the pronunciation of words and sentences rather than understanding what they actually means. Meanwhile it is a process when students will need to spend more time learning to form and recognize letters that differ from their alphabets. Early work could be carried out on noticing similarities and differences between the alphabets. At the initial stage of reading it is a good idea to encourage children to notice any examples of written English in their local environment, such as signs, notices or advertisements. This kind of reading awareness is a useful prelude to encouraging children to think about different reading purposes, such as reading stories for enjoyment and signs for information. At this level of reading schoolchildren can play simple alphabet games such as ‘Dominoes’, ‘Snap’ or ‘Bingo’. Other activities, such as labelling pictures with flashcards in alphabet or story friezes, or classifying words into word families help them to recognize the key words of a story and remember their meaning.

The use of charts of different kinds provides an intermediate stage in reading development and a framework to support children’s speaking skills. When using a chart pupils might describe, compare or classify things.

References


Аннотация

ЎҚУВЧИЛАРГА ИНГЛИЗ ТИЛИ ДАРСЛАРИДА АДАБИЙ МАТНЛАРДАН ТИЛ ЎРГАНИШ КЎНИКМАСИННИГ АСОСИ СИФАТИДА ФОЙДАЛАНИШ
А.Алиева

Маколада адабиёт ўқувчиларнинг коммуникатив кўникмаларини ўргатиш веоситаси сифатида тасвирланади. Бир қатор адабиётга асосланган фаолиятлар ўқувчиларнинг асосий тил билимларини ва
тилларни ўрганиш учи сифатида ўргатишга қаратилган. Ўқувчилар ёшга боғлиқ бўлган оригинал материаллардан фойдаланишга катта эътибор қаратилади.

Таянч сўзлар: тил муҳити, тил кўникмалари, аутентик материаллари, мустаҳкамлаш, турли ёшдаги ўрганувчилларга ўқув материалларини мослаштириш.

Аннотация

ХУДОЖЕСТВЕННЫЕ ТЕКСТЫ КАК ОСНОВА РАЗВИТИЯ ЯЗЫКОВЫХ НАВЫКОВ УЧАЩИХСЯ НА УРОКАХ АНГЛИЙСКОГО ЯЗЫКА

А.Алиева

В статье рассматривается проблема использования художественных текстов как средство развития коммуникативных навыков студентов, изучающих иностраный язык на начальном этапе обучения. Также рассматриваются виды упражнений, направленных на развитие языковых навыков как основы коммуникативных навыков. При этом учитываются использование аутентичных материалов и уровень обучения студентов.

Ключевые слова: языковая сфера, языковые навыки, аутентичный материал, усвоение изученного материала, отбор учебного материала согласно уровню знаний учащихся.

Summary

TEACHING LITERATURE TO DEVELOP YOUNG LEARNERS’ BASIC LANGUAGE SKILLS AND LANGUAGE AREA

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The article describes literature as a means to teach EFL students’ communicative skills. A series of literature-based activities are presented to teach students’ basic language skills and language areas as a foundation for communication. Great attention is focused on the use of authentic materials related to the age of the students.

Key words: language area, language skills, authentic material, material acquisition, material selection