

**Routledge Handbook ELT, ed. G. Hall.**

**Synopsis: Using literature in ELT**

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## Using literature in ELT

### 0. Introduction.

Literature can inspire, excite, and intrigue, and this engagement and inspiration is what is wanted in education of all kinds. In this chapter I contend that literature can be useful to expand vocabulary, awareness of register, genre and linguistic knowledge generally. But a stronger claim I would make is that the language and the ways the language is used in literary texts, are actually, however surprisingly, centrally relevant and in fact offer the kind of language and concerns our students will need to use and to deal with in real everyday life. In a sense I will clarify, language users do actually need to 'read literature' to read life, or read and use language in ways to which literature reading activities and literary text are recognisably valuable beyond the purely linguistic. This stronger claim will of course need some justification in what follows.

At the same time, I recognise that the very word *literature* for some will conjure up images of obscure poems or classic novels too long and from another age, books we feel we should have read and enjoyed but really couldn't. Sadly, the effect of much literature teaching in schools has been to convince those who have endured interminable lectures about the wonders of Shakespeare and T. S. Eliot that 'literature' has nothing to offer them. The assumption that literature is difficult and that these highly specialised texts should be presented as models for language students to contemplate respectfully will rightly be counter-intuitive if not absolute anathema to most English language teachers. What is advocated and explored here is rather a picture of selective use of literary texts and experiences as a resource for informed uses in language education, not unreflecting teaching of literature merely because 'it is there' or vaguely thought to be 'useful', or because the teacher has him or herself enjoyed it in the past. One of the most rewarding aspects of using literature in ELT is the genuine enthusiasm and even passion it can engender and consequent gains for communicative language learning which other materials do not always offer.

In ELT historically, as the communicative language teaching movement gathered momentum in western countries from the 1970s, literature often came to be seen as less relevant and useful in classrooms. Grammar translation was the enemy (simplistically speaking) and grammar translation had always relied on literature and indeed had seen the reading of literature as the ultimate reason for studying a foreign language. So literature in turn was out of favour at that time. The concentration in the brave new world of the 1970s was on speaking understood as everyday information exchanges, and initially reading, writing and wider educational aims were neglected in CLT in favour of more immediate 'high surrender' activities. This was an unfortunate historical development.

More generally, with increasingly dominant instrumental and vocational views of education in the west, literature has often fallen under suspicion across both L1 and L2 curriculums. In less well-resourced parts of the world, on the other hand, literature is still often taught for its own sake, its value self-evident, unquestioned or unquestionable, as reading material, or for vocabulary development, rather than on any better defined pedagogical principles. This is in some ways equally undesirable. A more recent position on literature use, with the rise in pedagogy of notions such as identity and feelings of learners – educational issues in short – resonates with ideas of learner-centredness, reader response, suspicion of classic literary canons, and then on to creative writing, drama workshops and altogether more active and interrogative approaches to literature study, all of which are illustrated later in this chapter.

(See a representative hostile view in , e.g. Horowitz, 1990; other hostile views, including Strevens, first UK Professor of Applied Linguistics, are reported in Hirvela, 1990). Even if ‘necessary’ language could be located incidentally and with difficulty in some literary texts, this argument ran, there were surely easier ways to teach it. Literature is a specialist concern for some advanced students only in this view, probably those intending to be teachers. Many universities, in the UK and in the US for example, do still ‘teach’ (lecture) specialist advanced students literature in a foreign language because that is what the professors themselves trained in and wrote their PhDs about. (Examples in Mantero, 2002; Donato and Brooks, 2004). At the school level on the other hand, communicative classes or more traditional approaches equip them with basic vocabulary and grammar, the standard language taught for purposes of information exchange in the ‘real world’ and ignore literature or use it unimaginatively in many cases. The point, however, is that this supposedly more practical language of service encounters and the like (restaurants, hotels and stations) will enable only limited meaningful engagement with the values and informing ideas of cultural groups who use that foreign language, as indeed documents like the Common European Framework (Council of Europe, 2001) are beginning to acknowledge. Users and learners of a foreign language will often want meaningful relations (Hanauer 2012) with other users of the language as well as to use the language to elaborate their own identities and desires (Kramsch 2006, 2009). This is where literature can provide an invaluable resource.

At the outset it needs to be emphasised that ‘literature’ in current approaches is emphatically literature with a small ‘l’ (McRae, 1991), a text which uses language imaginatively or creatively but not necessarily a ‘classic’ text. Literary text in such a view, is a use of language that is better related to other uses of language such as advertising or conversation than split off as somehow utterly different and even qualitatively superior. Stories, biography, travel literature, journalism, play scripts, diaries and blogs are all literature in this view. If *Jane Eyre* or *Things Fall Apart* or any other classic writing is to be valued more highly, this is something students should be encouraged to do for themselves rather than just accepting hand-me-down knowledge. Literature can be used to engage and motivate students, to get them to notice and work with language forms expressively, to explore new personal and imaginative worlds, and to communicate authentically.

*Literature has no rival in its power to create natural repetition, reflection on language and how it works, and attention to audience response on the part of learners.* (Heath 1996: 776).

Carter’s (2007) own pithy and informed survey of literature use in ELT opens with two basic questions:

- (1) What *is* literature, and what therefore should be *selected* as a basis for teaching literature, and why?
- (2) How should it be taught and what is its overall place, internationally, in language education?

(Carter, 2007: 4.)

I will address these two essential questions in turn, thereby expanding the quotation from Heath, and the chapter accordingly moves from more linguistic concerns initially, on to broader educational grounds for uses of literature in ELT.

Literature is a linguistic artefact, a ‘text’ and also an act of communication. I concern myself with the textual aspect, the language of literature first. I shall be more concerned with literature as an act of communication in section 3, on the reading of literature, though the two aspects are not entirely separable, how we read being significantly influenced by what we are reading. A better understanding of the nature of literature as text and as communication, together with a

consideration of some relevant features of language learning research in section 2, will then help clarify how literature is best selected and used in ELT in section 4. I conclude the chapter with some more recent developments and likely future directions for uses of literature in ELT.

### 1. The language of literature.

Literature has sometimes been assumed to be a distinct and specifiable use of language with unique and identifiable features, and these probably not features most obviously required in ELT. This is partly true, but at the same time not true in the way one might intuitively expect. Research has revealed that it is not so much the case that the language of literary texts is language not to be found in other texts (e.g. unusual vocabulary or grammar), but rather that language tends to be used in different ways and for different purposes and with greater variety. This range of otherwise representative language used in literary texts can be seen as an advantage to the learner, if admittedly sometimes also a challenge, but the right kind of challenge for those who need to pay attention to language and to expand their repertoires beyond a minimal survival core. Similarly, the purposefully creative uses of language in literary texts offer much to the learner wishing to expand their experience of the language in meaningful ways and increasingly to use the language being learned for their own expressive purposes.

Adamson (1998), for example, usefully demonstrates the increasing vernacularisation across all genres of 'literatures in English' as they have come to be called: modern English literary texts are increasingly characterised by ordinary everyday language, including more spoken forms, in poetry and drama as well as in the novel and short story. Dorst (2015) shows that it is not the case that literary texts use more metaphors and figurative language than other kinds of writing; rather metaphors in literary texts are more innovative (and so draw attention to themselves) and tend to be signalled more self-consciously. Same forms but different uses then. From the non-literary side, Lakoff and Johnson (1980) demonstrated the pervasively metaphorical nature of all everyday ordinary language use, and Carter (2004) the inherent and routinely creative uses of language in everyday exchanges between users. It became increasingly clear from such research that if anything was distinctive about the language of literature it was that it was not narrowly distinctive, unlike the language of business letters or lab reports, which are more limited and demonstrably more specialised uses of language. Interestingly, virtually anything goes in a literary text to achieve one's communicative purposes – and in this way it is much like more everyday uses of language too. Dialect, sociolects, professional and occupational registers, representations of accent, style variation, genre mixing and all the rest are to be found deployed throughout modern literature, but not in isolation, and often in foregrounded and highly contextualised ways which lend themselves well to learning. The jargon of a lawyer may be used for memorably comic purposes, or a careful formal register may show uneasy relationships between characters the reader cares about. A character is shown moving from job interview to chat with a friend or a stranger on a train. The poet thoughtfully rehearses or replays words he did not say but meant to say or to express differently – much as a language learner does too. Literature artfully prompts the attentive reader to notice the specialised nature of any specialised language it uses.

Language used in literature then is a use of language uniquely representative of the wider language able to draw on all the resources of the language for creative or imaginative purposes, and regularly doing so. It is also a use of language often prompting its readers to consider its form and use particularly carefully. (Why did s/he use that word? What exactly does that mean? Why is that term repeated exactly or with variations?) Literary language use will often draw attention to itself (as Jakobson (1960) had argued). No other genre or use of language does this to the same degree, and the argument here is that literature in this way offers unique 'affordances' (van Lier, 2000) for language learners who need to cope with language as it is used and as it can be used, and to begin to

use it for themselves for their own purposes, rather than to learn some imagined 'classroom English' which will only help them pass badly constructed tests in school. The language of literature is 'authentic' in that sense, if engaged with – and is in fact designed to prompt engagement.

The literary text, linguistically, is best defined negatively then, as a text not identifiably belonging to any precise genre, and whose precise purpose or intended addressee is not entirely clear but needs to be elaborated by individual readers for their own purposes in a particular context. It may well call upon a wider range of language than more specialised texts do, and may also do this in more noticeable ways. This and only this is the unusual or specific nature of literature, and as already argued, such features lend themselves well to the aims of the language learner. Ordinary conversation may be one of the most contextualised and local of uses of language, but again, novels and drama re-cycle features of such everyday conversation for their own purposes using all the same devices and more, and require reader attention and active reader contextualisation activity. The reader of literature can be drawn into intellectual and emotional engagement of a kind not many other texts can elicit. Literature, like conversation, is both 'pointless' and of the utmost importance, and both can be surprisingly unpredictable. Through literature - broadly understood as engaged or imaginative language use- as in everyday conversation, we can define who we and others are, our values and beliefs, our likes and dislikes, and similarities to and differences from valued and less valued others. It had long been proposed by the schoolmasters that standard language was to be found at its most perfect in Literature, but such ideas of Literature were shown to be linguistically unfounded. Literature may represent the best that has been thought and known (as Victorian man of letters Matthew Arnold had proposed) but it was only the most expressive because its full use of the resources of the language extended way beyond the supposed 'standard' language as taught in English classes around the world. Readers (see further below) actually contextualise for themselves as they read a literary text (or listen to a new song), often contextualising through meaningful interaction with others, whether on line or face to face, another important language learner affordance.

## **2. Literature and Second language Learning.**

In the preceding section I showed a number of ways in which the language of literature should be of interest to language learners and to their teachers. I now turn to deal with some findings from research into second language learning which again suggests literary texts and the reading of literature could be of value to language learners. I begin by discussing more cognitive approaches and move on through the section to the relevance of more sociocultural understandings of second language learning. Under the first heading I deal with topics such as attention and noticing, connectionist theories of second language acquisition, the importance of tolerance of ambiguity for language and culture learners, and the ability to infer successfully as a factor in successful language learning and language use. From the more sociocultural perspective, I deal with issues such as language learning as appropriation, engagement and estrangement, and language play and creativity of language learners. Nobody holds any magic key to language learning, and literature is certainly not any such magic key to this complex activity, but it is argued in Section 2 that using literature can score well on some important known conditions for second language learning.

### **2.1. Cognitive approaches to SLA.**

Second language learning (SLL) has traditionally been studied from cognitive and psychological perspectives as 'second language acquisition' (SLA). Those approaches have taught us much and give some good theoretical grounds for uses of literature in ELT. Schmidt (1990) on 'noticing', for example, or elsewhere ideas of giving attention. All these cognitive theories and models point to the potential uses of literary texts as those which by definition require or can prompt deeper reader or

listener cognitive engagement than many other kinds of communication, interaction both with meaning, but also, or through, close attention to the linguistic forms of the text ('focus on form'). It may seem obvious, but attention has to be paid to language forms if they are to be learned. Noticing a form that is not known or not known well enough, paying conscious attention to it, seems to be a precondition for much successful language learning. Readers of literature often report exact memory for the words of a favourite or meaningful literary text or extract, that those words in that order are particularly effective for them. The internet features many examples of favourite quotations or passages where the precise language used has been noticed and resonates for a reader. Reading studies have recorded the tendency of readers to slow their reading rate as they read passages later reported to be meaningful or in some way important for reading or pleasurable. Precise words matter. Indeed, favourite or enjoyed passages are often read more than once. It can be seen immediately then that these features of literary reading where they occur are in principle favourable to learning and memorability. Teachers of grammar, for example, often emphasise the importance of focus on the exact form of a word and its meaning in the learning of those forms and meanings. The teacher using literature can exploit the importance of using this word rather than that in the literary work, probably one of the most carefully revised and expressed kinds of writing most societies have (e.g. the meaning of this choice of tense rather than another that could have been selected, of using an indefinite article or definite, a lexical choice, a choice of word order and so on.)

Learning requires attention, then, but also requires repeated acts of qualitative attention. One inspection of a word or form will not be enough, nor will an uninterested noticing. 'Foregrounding' is a basic feature of literary texts typically identified by traditional stylistics, i.e. the text by design draws attention to its linguistic forms (words and structures, sounds, spelling or others). This is the attention the learner needs to give. But it is also worth noting that this foregrounding often works in practice as exact or near repetition or other patterning, or through innovative figurative uses of language or in many other ways studied by stylisticians, and the proposal here is that such devices are of value to language learners who need to 'notice' and pay attention to forms according to SLA. See for example the rich pedagogical resource of ELT of Alan Maley's (1993) *Short and Sweet* series, with its jokes, anecdotes, prayers from religions of the world and so on, all highly patterned. Compare at a more obviously 'literary' level, advertising, or the refrains and choruses of poems, ballads and lyrics right through to (say) the repetitive prose styles of Dickens or D. H. Lawrence. 'Beans Means Heinz' (an advertising slogan with obvious phonological patterning) is linguistically a similar phenomenon to: 'And miles to go before I sleep/ And miles to go before I sleep', the conclusion of Frost's poem 'Stopping by Woods on a Snowy Evening', where a reader notes the deliberate repetition and is likely to be prompted to interpret it. Teachers can draw attention to patterning in a text through prediction activities or extensions of the technique. Rhyme is an instance of such repetition, or alliteration and assonance, which can teach phonology but also sound in the service of meaning. Boers and colleagues have shown how phonologically motivated many idioms are in English. We remember such sayings often at least partly because of the insistent sound patterning (spick and span, thin edge/ end of the wedge, happy as Harry) (Boers). As argued in section 1, ordinary everyday language use is surprisingly poetic when looked at more closely and awareness of such poetics, in principle as well as in specific instances, can help both teachers and students.

To return directly to SLL studies, 'connectionism' points to the importance of repetition and recycling or near recycling in the acquisition of grammatical patterns and formulaic 'chunks' of language as well as collocations and down to specific lexical items (e.g. Ellis 2003, 2005). Literary reading or listening to literary works (including, e.g., music lyrics) can be a pleasurable and engaging way of experiencing frequent and probable uses of the language or highlighting noticeably unusual uses. Repetition and significant patterning are basic to the workings of literary text as studied in stylistics.

(See Simpson 2013 for one of the best recent introductions to stylistics; Hall 2014 on uses of stylistics in pedagogy).

Other cognitive approaches emphasise 'the tolerance of ambiguity' as a positive trait for language learners (e.g. Chapelle and Roberts, 1986). Emmott (1997), Gerrig (1993) and others have shown how precisely 'tolerance of ambiguity' is needed for successful reading of much literature, and indeed that arguably a reader learns or at least improves such habits of cognition through repeated engagement with literary texts. Writers of detective novels will plant clues which may or may not help the reader solve the crime, an apparently 'good' character turns out to be less trustworthy than we thought, or a first person narrator, the reader gradually realises, does not fully understand her own situation or fully tell the truth about it. These are all instances of the kind of 'tolerance of ambiguity' successful literary reading requires and develops (as, of course, do cinema or many other art forms: as throughout, my idea of the 'literary' needs to be understood very broadly.)

inferencing, elaboration, elaborated processing and deeper processing of language input

Beyond the processing and close attention to surface linguistic forms, cognitive approaches to second language learning also emphasise the value of learning to infer, to read between the lines generally, and to understand the significance of words beyond any literal or apparent meaning they might seem to have. A moment's reflection suggests that literature scores highly here again, from the clever advert right up to the late novels of Henry James or the most obscure modernist poems. (See Sanford and Emmott (2012) for a useful recent survey of cognitive research relevant to literature reading). 'What is (really) going on here? Why am I being told this? Why were these words used here in this order?' Questions like these will be prompted by more creative and imaginative uses of language (called here 'literature') and practice in this kind of language processing for meaning, with close attention to linguistic surface forms (the actual words used) is just what is argued to be of benefit to the language learner by researchers in second language learning. Beyond this, it is widely recognised that sustained attention to and manipulation of language, helps retention in longer term memory and fuller understanding of how terms can be used. Again, literature may be of help to learners here too if tasks can be designed to prompt sufficient engagement with the texts chosen. The desire to 'turn the page', to finish the book as well as to re-read and to tell others about one's reading, including emotional involvement in it, are all signs of the kind of engagement that will facilitate language learning. Ideas of 'hot cognition' etc, in more cognitive approaches, also recognise these facts in pointing to the relevance of emotions to thinking and understanding: reading, just as other uses of language, can set the heart racing, make us physically uncomfortable or affect our feelings and bodies in multiple ways, any of which could be linked to learning (see Sanford and Emmott (2012) again for a readable state of the art account of research into the relations between feeling and thinking). It will hardly surprise educators to be told that feelings are very much linked to learning. Current focuses of such research are empathy and suspense, for example, which are clearly linked by psychologists to memory and learning. A 'good read' can be still for many be an accessible way to experience such emotions as much as a thriller movie or an internet videogame.

## 2.2. Sociocultural approaches to SLL.

language learning as appropriation, engagement and estrangement, and language play and creativity of language learners

For many today, in ways which many language teachers may find easier to relate to, second language learning is best understood from social, sociocultural or sociocognitive perspectives. Where SLA is focused on language learnING (a process), the shift today is to consider language learnERS (people), a view surely more consonant with the interests of educators. Learners in such a view are individuals, rather than disembodied isolate brains ('cognition') and individuals in turn are

social beings. Learning takes place in and through particular contexts and situations, which are important for the forms and directions learning will take. The metaphors for learning in this approach are not *input*, *intake*, *output* or even 'connections' and the like. Rather language learning is figured as *appropriation or participation* in a new community of practice (Lantolf, 2000: Introduction) and even imaginative or imaginary identification (Kramsch 2009; also Dörnyei on motivation). The task of the language learner in such a view is to find a place and voice in the new language and the new language community, and this will be done by interacting under given conditions and in given contexts with speakers and utterances of the new language.

s/cult: I learning by talking – Vygotskian views, Lantolf etc (stories??)

Literature is relevant to such a socialised view of language learning because it offers language that learners can engage with in various ways, whether it be immersion, resistance, pleasure or irritation, but all responses engaging the individual in deep ways with ideas that matter to them (compare Maley and Duff, 1989; Maley 2001 on 'non-triviality'). Literature in this view consists of texts which explore what it means to be human, including ultimate issues of death, life and love, illness and health, what is right and what is wrong, social identity including gender, race and ethnicity, sexual orientation and others, important feelings and emotions, whether positive or negative. Such issues matter to a learner at a deeper level than directions to the station, and the argument is that in areas like these literary text can motivate and engage the language learner to want to understand, to express him or herself, and to define their own position and new identity through using what this language and its texts seem to offer. A frequent learner comment in second language creative writing programmes (Hanauer, 2010; Iida, 2012) is along the lines of 'I could never have said/ would never have thought of that in my own language', and this is valued by learners. The work of Norton (2000) on gender and identity as factors in language learning, or Pavlenko (2007), for example, on emotions in learner perspectives on language learning, or even Dörnyei and Ushioda (2010) on the highly dynamic and contextual nature of motivation, shows how important feelings and specific learning situations and experiences are in determining the relation of a learner to a language and its texts. Wanting to engage with that language and to use it for one's own purposes are argued to be fundamental to success in language development, and imaginative and creative texts can be central in promoting and supporting such engagement (eg Kramsch 2009).

[Since that time Belz (2002), Bell (2005), Tin (2011) and others have shown how playful and creative even the language of 'lower level' learners is, both in and out of classrooms.]

Indeed, the importance of language play is a very live research issue and an important arena in which to facilitate language development as well as development of the learner more widely in social and sociocultural views of researchers like Cook (2000), Bell (2000) or Belz (2002): 'I do not believe that language play, in and of itself, leads to successful SLA ... I do believe, however, that without language play learning is unlikely to occur' (Lantolf, 1997) [T]here is good reason to regard [second] language play both as a means and an end of language learning... [an] ability to play with language [could even be used as a] test of proficiency' (Cook 2000, 204; both quoted in Belz 2002, 14) Any teacher or learner will have noticed instances of humour, repetitions or deliberate variations and modifications, invented possible words, language play as puns, (mis) translations, mispronunciations, invented words or structures and the like on a daily basis in classrooms and out. The challenge, according to this research, is to move from ignoring or tolerating such episodes as peripheral or frivolous, to see them as intrinsic and necessary to language learning. The ultimate examples of such ludic texts once again are of course broadly 'literary' texts, whether jokes, stories and riddles, or puns or other 'bending' (exploring) of the possibilities the language offers, as has been long known, studied and valued in first language development (eg Beard 1995). We note again that authors such as Belz report 'rampant language switching' (21), own language use mixed with

and measured against the new language. Readers of English or European literatures may be reminded of Edward Lear, Lewis Carroll or Georges Perec (nonsense literature, or playful works) but should also consider nursery rhymes, nicknames and what Halliday (1978) called 'antilanguages' of all kinds (i.e. languages invented by their users both to include those it is desired to communicate with and at the same time to exclude the rest). Once again, reductive notions of 'communication' are challenged by examining actual instances of pervasively creative language use by both fluent and less fluent human users and considering their functions.

In all these more sociocultural and sociolinguistic understandings of language learning, the agency of the learner is emphasised, using the language to pursue their own ends including the construction of their own evolving identities. Cook (2002) urges that educators consider the idea of 'multicompetence' rather than 'an additional language' (i.e. separate, unrelated). Cook like many others now, is suggesting we stop thinking of the language learner as a deficient communicator and respect instead their advantages of metalinguistic awareness, but also cognitive flexibility, originality and fluency offered by multilingualism. I would argue activities around literature can help learners reflect on language and life and to use language in just such original and creative ways. Pleasure and pride can derive from foreign language achievement (rather than shame and guilt) 'I speak like this because I am me not you' -and I don't have a problem with it. The development of new voices - agency, self- control and power, -are all part of such a view of language learning.

Languages evolve, because users use them in varying ways to express evolving ideas and feelings. Evolution and variation is a central defining feature of language and language use, and literature is the name for texts which explore and innovate by definition. Hence literary texts and the responses they provoke in language users are central to real language use. At the least, they represent a resource which it is foolish for a teacher to ignore.

(Compare Paran (2008) for a valuable critique of narrowly linguistic approaches to uses of literature in ELT which have neglected practical classroom and educational issues).

Educt – methodology, resources, etc what to do with lit in a classroom Selection of texts

### **3. Literature as second language reading**

In discussion of the reading of literature in a first language, educationists generally have moved toward reader response approaches, particularly at school level, where the learner-reader is encouraged to express personal ideas and reactions to texts based on their knowledge and experience up to that point. Reader response criticism has been characterised by a growing awareness of the importance of the reader to construction of literary meaning. Many articles in *ELT Journal* and elsewhere testify to the interest in and applications of reader response approaches in ELT (special issue: Elliot 1990, Ali 1990). The approach is seen as learner-centred and more likely to promote 'real communication' in a language classroom with all the advantages in terms of second language learning claimed for such authentic interactions by CLT practitioners and theorists. At university level, however (e.g. Mantero 2002), or where the focus is more on literature study than on language learning, teaching seems to be dominated by an approach to foreign language literature in which the teacher is an expert and the text has a meaning which the expert teacher will prod half-engaged students into learning. Facts and low level lexical translation typically occur, superficial 'comprehension' questions and answers unlikely, as we saw in the previous section, to support or enhance language learning to any great extent, only perhaps incidentally and according to individual varying propensities to learn in this way. A key affordance of the literary text for personally meaningful discussions is characteristically being missed in such circumstances. Kim (2004) or Scott and Huntington (2007) show how more valuable text-based or text-originating discussions can

proceed from more open approaches. Indeed the Scott and Huntington article is particularly interesting not only because the classes described are low level proficiency, but also for showing that a teacher can help facilitate more valuable discussions than took place in groups where a teacher was not present to facilitate (compare Vygotskian 'scaffolding'), where by contrast their learners became fixated on linguistic detail and indeed on basic 'comprehension' with an apparent reluctance or inhibition to enter into more significant discussions, though they could do this when led.

As for individuals reading for themselves outside of classrooms, cognitive studies using 'think out loud' procedures (TOL), protocols or recalls (Gass and Mackey 2000; Bowles 2010) show typically intensive processing of the language of literary texts, particularly of poetry or shorter texts, and attempts to make connections both linguistically and to world knowledge of the reader. Where such solitary engagement with the text comes about it would seem to be useful for language learning at least considered as development of reading skills, and the incidental acquisition of vocabulary or some structures. Elsewhere emotions, feelings, pleasure, curiosity, engagement with characters (empathy research e.g. Sklar) are all evidence of texts potentially suitable for language teaching and learning. Naturally, also reported are difficulties of reading, the difficulties of reading in a second language, including working memory, online cognition, as well as the direct and indirect benefits of reading in a second language, in linguistic terms but also in developing reading skills.

Student attitudes research shows most students are at best agnostic when it comes to the use of literature in language education. Some teachers may feel poetry is a particularly valuable resource, but learners consistently tell us they prefer prose, especially realist short stories with conventional narrative structure. They can be convinced by good teachers using literature imaginatively, but generally feel that it is probably not an efficient way to learn to use the language. The teacher who intends to use literary texts in any way should be aware of such attitudes and prepared to engage with them and above all will need to demonstrate how or why her uses of literature are worthwhile. A notable finding in the light of my earlier points about literary language, is that there is clear evidence still of student resistance to non-standard English features in lit texts, rather as research shows teachers and students sceptical about the claims of ELF (English as a lingua franca) or doubting other 'world Englishes' variations. A challenging but important task for the language teacher today more than ever is to teach the need to engage with English as a world language and to be at least aware of its full range of variation, as evidenced by literary texts of all kinds. (Pedagogically, see McRae and Vathamani 1999)

Literature use in ELT can also be considered under the rubric of extensive reading, as advocated by Krashen, Elley, or Day et al. (2011), through to Schmidt's research on incidental vocabulary acquisition through extensive reading in our own day. Again, some of the issues are discussed in Hall 2015. There is no doubt that many foreign language readers find increasingly well written 'readers' worthwhile, even if some educators hold serious reservations about the simplified texts often found and there is still much to understand better, for example concerning the contribution of glosses, marginal notes and other variations in presentation of these materials.

#### **4. Literature in second language Education**

Selection: based on the above... only partly based on language features (lexical field, genre, situation) .. read on... It will also be based on principles of learning and teaching in the English language classroom.

*'I refuse to look at my students as primarily history majors, accounting majors, nursing majors. I much prefer to treat them as people whose most important conversations will take place outside the academy, as they struggle to figure out how to live their lives - that is, how to vote and love and survive, how to respond to change and diversity and death and oppression and freedom'* (Tate, 1993: 320)

In the modern globalised economy with its conditions of ongoing pervasive, rapid and extensive change, Tate is right to suggest that education is more than ever about promoting capacity, flexibility and readiness rather than teaching instantly obsolescent knowledges. In the UK, doctors in medical training now spend precious learning time in compulsory modules studying what is known of stories (narrative) and communication, including uses of metaphor and other evaluative devices as it has come to be realised that illness is a whole person phenomenon not merely a set of symptoms to be treated by drugs. Kramsch shows the relevance of such holistic and human understandings to second language learning adolescents and others: 'true education as opposed to training' (Tate 1993, 321)

MLA Guidelines, ACTFL standards (from the USA), Council of Europe "Framework" and other such documents informing language curriculums, teacher training and materials design, demonstrate a growing interest in the role that literature and culture need to play in language education at the highest levels of planning and policy down to the next lesson. In terms of research, unfortunately, Paran (2008) (also Maley 2001) rightly highlights the problem that research into uses of literature in ELT and others is typically carried out by specialists in universities in the west, or obscure AR (action research) type studies published, if at all, in minor national or teacher publications, or hidden away in MA and PhD dissertations. There has been a regrettable researcher- practitioner split or lack of meaningful interface, even though survey articles like this are one way in which bridges are being attempted.

In terms of methodology, syllabus and so on, what to teach and how, the key teacher-practitioner questions, the news is actually comforting! While training in using literature is lacking in most ELT teacher education, if literature is not itself found intimidating or unattractive (as it still often will be) the good news is that tasks are the best way in to literary texts as to any others (precise considerations on designing tasks for literary texts in Durant, 1996, or Duff and Maley, 1990). If literature, as has been argued, is discourse not unlike other uses of language, then the same techniques and methods can be used as for any other text, or as in established approaches to the teaching of reading. Stylistics has already been mentioned as offering linguistic ways into interactive and exploratory study of a literary text. Related are the 'transformation' exercises of (perhaps the best example) Rob Pope (1995) Again, dramatisations (e.g. Elgar 2002) or other performances, translations to the film medium as well as genre, style, narratology (e.g. Carter & Long, 1987, 1991), indeed actual linguistic translations as discussed earlier are now recognised to be of real learning value (Cook 2010). The point to stress is that the literary text is no longer considered sacrosanct. Teachers and learners can and should play around with it to discover how it works, and how perhaps it may be made to work better for them- to promote autonomy, in short. Many useful methodology and related books and materials are now available, including Lazar (1993), Parkinson and Thomas (2000), Duff & Maley (1990), Carter and Long (1987, 1991) There are also numerous websites, British Council resources and so on.

The best tasks and activities, however, as with any text type, will exploit to the full the specific features of the text. Literary texts do not only offer topics or themes. They offer valuable uses of language as I argued at the outset, and to my mind this is where its greatest affordances lie: this is the real challenge for teachers in designing the best tasks and activities.

## 5. More recent developments/ Future directions...

Primary ELT Young Learners, Teenagers. (Bland 2013; also Sell 1995/6) use of children's lit young adult lit etc with non-target audience, picture books

Culture ICC

multimodality (Bland), ICT, film video eg visual, literacy, literary literacy and critical cultural literacy (Bland, 2013) ... web resources (Lima), corpora,

Translation, own language use, mediators, multilingual world...

metaphor research/ elt? idioms etc?? metaphor teaching, metaphor in prof (eg Littlemore et al)Picken 2007? Boers and L.

creative writing drama performance

reading groups, reading circles, incl reading groups on line (Lima)

adaptations, appropriations into other media, 'transformations' (Hutcheon, Sanders).

EWL, globalisation

### Further Reading.

Carter, R. (2007) Literature and language teaching 1986-2006: A review. *International Journal of Applied Linguistics* 17 (1), 3-13. Useful overview of relevant research; argues need for more study and development of longer term aspects of literature teaching in ELT, syllabus, assessment, longer term development where focus has mostly been on individual lessons, specific materials design etc rather than the place of literature in larger aims and issues in ELT education.

Hall, G. (2015) *Literature in Language Education*. Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan. Thoroughly revised and updated second edition, in some ways a fuller version of this chapter; also includes ideas and guidance for research projects in this area.

Kramsch, C.(2006) Preview article: *The Multilingual Subject*. *International Journal of Applied Linguistics* 16 (1): 97-110. Previews Kramsch (2009) in brief, summary form to help you decide if you need to read the whole book. Wider educational, intercultural and personal development considerations relevant to literature use in ELT.

Maley, A. (2001) Literature in the language classroom. In R. Carter and D. Nunan (eds.) *The Cambridge Guide to TESOL*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, pp. 180-185. A very experienced CLT practitioner's eye view of the field and issues.

Paran, A. (2008) The role of literature in instructed foreign language learning and teaching: An evidence-based survey. State of the art article. *Language Teaching* 41 (4), 465-496. Valuable and fully informed overview which also argues for applied linguists to interact more fruitfully with language teachers around practical issues in language development and education, partly a useful complement to Carter (2007).

### Discussion Questions.

ELT teaching of the increasing numbers of young learners and teens in particular brings with it challenges and opportunities around the use of literary texts with illustrations, audio resources, but also comic books, film, games, the internet and more. You may wish to consider some examples of texts where such multimodal resources are available and how they are best integrated into language teaching programmes and activities.

Creative writing, creativity, and language play more generally are all intrinsic to literary and imaginative uses of language broadly considered as in this chapter. How can literary texts be used, adapted and developed best in the light of contemporary research in second language learning that points to the importance of play and creativity for learners.

Literatures in English are being produced and (re-)discovered from across the world with the ongoing globalisation of English. What opportunities and challenges does the use of literatures in English from Africa, Asia and others bring to ELT education?

A key problem with much literature teaching is the use of study guides, translations and other aids rather than engage with the perceived or real difficulties of actually reading literature in the original language version. What strategies are best to meet this issue both in the classroom and in assessment exercises if the belief is that engagement with the original language text is the aim?

Few teacher training programmes have time for sessions on the use of literature and many teachers are not themselves readers of literature. If claims for the value of literature in ELT made in this chapter are largely accepted, is this lack of specific training a problem? or can the trained teacher simply be trusted to transfer techniques and principles learned elsewhere to the use of literature

### **Related Topics:**

*English as a Lingua Franca and World Englishes; Curriculum Design; Educational Perspectives on ELT; ELT Materials; Language Teacher Education; Learner Autonomy; Sociocultural Theory; Motivation; Primary ELT; Teenage and secondary ELT; Teaching Literacy; Language, Culture, and Intercultural Communication for ELT; Classroom Discourse; Questioning 'English-Only Classrooms.*

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