

comunicare. Concluzia finală este aceea că metodele tradiționale coexistă cu cele moderne în predarea limbii engleze, fiecare având avantajele ei și elemente ce pot fi oricând folosite cu succes.

### **Bibliografie**

1. APR Howatt, *A History of English Language Teaching*, Oxford University Press, Oxford, 1984.
2. Harmer, Jeremy, *The Practicice of English Language Teaching*, Pearson Education Limited, 2001.
3. Larsen-Freeman, Diane, *Techniques and Principles in Language Teaching*, Oxford University, Oxford, 1986.
4. Scrivener, Jim, *Learning teaching*, Macmillan Publishers Limited, UK , 2005.
5. Vizental, Adriana, *Metodica predării Limbii Engleze*, Editura Polirom, Iași, 2008.

## **THE LITERARY TEXT AS A VALUABLE RESOURCE IN THE LANGUAGE CLASSROOM**

*Lilia PETRICIUC, university lecturer*

### **Rezumat**

*Scopul articolului este de a accentua importanța reintroducerii textului literar, extrem de marginalizat de către abordarea comunicativ-acțională, la orele de limbă engleză. Actualmente, marea majoritate a manualelor de limbă străină, utilizate la nivel național și internațional, prezintă o carență crasă de texte literare, iar impactul pe termen lung al acestora se traduce în deficiențe semnificative în interpretarea limbajului cu sens figurat, al gândirii critice și a competenței interculturale. Analizând beneficiile textului literar la orele de limbă străină, se indică cum acestea pot fi exploatate pentru a atinge obicetivele învățării în sec XXI (the four Cs of Learning in the XXI century): colaborare, creativitate, competență interculturală, gândire critică.*

Literary texts are outstanding resources for developing communicative competence in foreign language for an extensive

number of advantages. In the language class, literary texts serve a wide range of purposes, as it will be explained later in the article and the benefits they bring upon, outweigh the challenges that can be posed by difficult language use or complex syntax.

Many researchers have posited that the literary text ought to be properly viewed and exploited as an instructional resource in the foreign language class, firstly and foremost because it is the best example of authentic material displaying a wide range of language registers. Comparatively, traditional foreign language course books do not guarantee learners this privilege of exploring language variety. Sivasubramanian, 2006, states that” the contemporary emphasis on course books seems to be monopolizing English classrooms all over the world, hindering students from experiencing the imaginative content of literary texts” [3, p. 258].

Historically, the Grammar Translation Method, the Communicative Approach and the so-called *Communic'ational* (*communicative+actional*) one has greatly contributed to the gradual exclusion of literary texts from language classes. Despite the justified efforts of researchers, and teachers sometimes, of reintegrating the literary text in foreign language curricula, there has not been notable progress, namely because many consider literature far too sophisticated and irrelevant in the case of foreign language learners. The new trend in foreign language teaching/learning that emphasizes that learners acquire language better if they are emotionally engaged, highlights the fact that literature serves this purpose perfectly. When dealing with literary texts, learners can “travel” to far away destinations, “place” themselves in the main characters’ shoes, agree or disagree in different situations, take “live or die” decisions, simultaneously acquiring language. The social-emotional aspects reflected on in literary should not be neglected by educators. Sivasubramanian.S. argues that course-books do not provide for any emotional and reflective engagement with the target language. This is because course-books, for want of interesting and engaging

content, focus the learners' attention on the mechanical aspects of language learning [3, p. 262].

Nowadays, with the acknowledgement that lack of contact with literary texts translates into lack of essential skills, significant efforts are made to bring the literary text back into the language classroom. D. Xeri, 2012, contends that "despite the fact that there are those who feel that the practice of using literary texts in English language teaching distracts from the business of language teaching/learning, most of the research literature concludes the incorporation of such texts in English lessons has multiple benefits" [4, p. 18]. For literature to really matter in the language class, it is important to be integrated with a definite purpose and when the objective is clearly specified, then it becomes absolutely relevant. Joshua Cruz states the following, in an attempt to prove the need for dealing with literature in language classes "The study of literature allows people to develop new ideas and ethical standpoints and can help individuals to present themselves as educated members of society. Studying literature can be enriching, eye-opening experience" [5].

Literature has been defined in a number of ways, which means it is such a versatile, flexible cultural product, encompassing an outstanding amount of information that ought to be taken advantage of, particularly in language classes. C. S. Lewis emphasizes this idea explaining the function and role of it as follows "Literature just adds to reality, it does not simply describe it. It enriches the necessary competencies that daily life requires and provides; and in this respect, it irrigates the deserts that our lives have already become" [C.S. Lewis, apud 5].

Reading has long been proven to be the most effective way of improving language skills. This is a strong reason advocating for the reintegration of literary texts in the language classroom. J. Trounstein believes that "The study of literature offers many ways to improve literacy: it gives access to language, reading, writing, a

shared culture and one's own self," opinion reinforced by an extensive number of studies. Foreign language Curricula do not have to be literature-based. Foreign language learners will benefit greatly from merely supplementing the course-books with relevant, well-chosen literary texts. These are not necessarily archetypal, classic creations since nowadays many writers from different corners of the world write in English. All language skills can be effectively developed via literary texts, which allow for countless language focused activities. As D. Xerri reveals, teachers can strike a balance between traditional course book materials and literary texts and this will provide their students with a more holistic language experience [4, p. 18].

Language and culture are inseparable entities, and literature is a faithful reflection of culture that is why its exploitation in the language classroom becomes a necessity, a must, and a demand. Moreover, scientific research has shown that students who do not interact with literature, have serious deficiencies in interpreting and negotiating meanings; they keep to the surface of a text, instead of going beyond the literal meanings of words used. Literary texts broaden learners' perceptions of other cultures, help them understand better different behavior patterns and they can relate these to personal experiences and get an insightful view of themselves as cultural beings. In Carter and Long's opinion "such perceptions help students to see the core of human situations that can occur cross-culturally. Furthermore, these perceptions equip them with the critical sensibilities they need to question, accept or reject the cultural assumptions of texts [apud 3, p. 263].

The changes in the world pose constant demands on people and education is powerless at anticipating the innumerable situations learners might be facing in life. Therefore, it strives to equip them with a "survival kit", more specifically, competences they will be able to exploit in order to adjust and face the challenges of times. These are the so-called four Cs of Learning in the 21<sup>st</sup> century.

Literature serves as a perfect milieu, which, judiciously exploited, contributes to their development.

*Collaboration*-the student is at the center of all learning and literary texts give an extensive number of opportunities to the learner to interact with others as part of pair work, group or team work. Literary texts present genuine situations from which learners can effectively co-construct meaning and develop language skills. Acting out scenes from the text, speculating, brainstorming, debating, the hot seat, case studies, connecting to life, etc are just a few activities that can be carried on to achieve this objective when dealing with a literary text. Sense-making interactions or collaborative writing will ensure positive results in developing collaborative skills in learners.

*Communication* is at the heart of any language class and it can be tremendously enhanced if the learners are given a text that describes familiar realities that are of great interest to them. When they are engrossed into a text, they will all have something to say about it, thus fostering their communicative competence in foreign language. When dealing with a topic of great interest, the learners will be challenged to express personal viewpoints and thus they will try to speak out, forgetting about accuracy, which, in its turn, promotes fluency. Students will have the opportunity to bring in their own response to the text, their own interpretations to the situation and consequently, develop their communicative competence, without relying strictly on its linguistic dimension. Though, as Littlewood, 2005 noted, literary texts are predominantly recommended to develop reading skills, “they could also be exploited for purposes such as grammar or indicating various types of language usage” [2, pp. 129-130]. Apart from it, the numerous types of language learning activities can accommodate for different learning styles and include even the struggling students. Differentiation can effectively be coped with while exploring literary texts: every learner will have a say about the story, the characters or the plot, connecting them to their personal experiences or reflecting upon them.

*Creativity*- school cannot offer learners ready-made solutions to unknown problems of a fast-changing world. Teachers must make sure they are guiding students towards developing their own creativity which will come in handy when facing real life problems. Literature can foster creativity in multiple ways with the learners producing their own original texts.

*Critical thinking* could not be perceived as a separate body of knowledge and it is a time-taking, in-depth process that can be learned. Language teachers acknowledge that it cannot be disconnected from language learning and consequently incite the learners with different high order thinking tasks that promote its development. Literary texts challenge learners to think critically and draw conclusions distinguishing between fact and opinion, observation and interpretation.

Another great advantage literary texts bring into the language class consists in the possibility to explore different language varieties. For this purpose alone, it is worth going the extra mile and spending precious time to tackle with this aspect of a foreign language. David Crystal posits that “all types of language variation, be it historical, regional, or social, account for the heterogeneity of the English language” [1, p. 206]. When dealing with a text picturing language variety, the students may not manage to internalize much about how one and the same language may vary depending on a number of factors, but they will increase awareness of what to expect when interacting with users of English belonging to different communities or ethnic groups, though officially they may be native speakers of it.

The figurative meaning that language units normally acquire in literary text develop an undervalued, underestimated competence in the learners- that of reading between the lines, trying to construct or re-construct meaning from a larger context. Sad to note, as a teacher, I have observed my adult students struggling with making sense out of some literary passages, complaining that the dictionary

meaning of words seem to contradict the story. The reason behind this failure was not in their having poor language skills, but in their lack of experience with literary texts and inability to go beyond literal meanings. Their lack of regular contact with literary texts (so far just informative texts have been explored, in keeping with the course-book) has translated into this inability to get over the surface meaning of words, without even trying to go deeper and make additional connections with the larger context.

In these fast-changing times, the need for solid moral values is more relevant than ever. With materialistic trends mostly pervasive in modern societies, young generations have deficiencies in showing empathy or sympathy to others. Literature represents that one educational resource that can efficiently tap into these socio-cultural dimensions of human behavior and communication.

Having strong intercultural competences has become a vital necessity in order to be able to carry on effective interactions with users of other languages and avoid bias or misunderstanding. Literary texts offer this opportunity to learners to explore other cultures not just in terms of cultural products, but most importantly, in terms of perspectives and practices. An efficient language teacher will judiciously choose a literary text that deals with sociocultural issues, not strictly in English speaking countries, ignite the learners' curiosity and incite them to discover more and to consider how differences between their own culture and the one revealed in the text can be approached. Literary texts contribute significantly to learning more about the learners' own culture: only when they know exactly who they are in terms of culture, will they be able to righteously appreciate diversity and differences.

Having highlighted some of the major benefits literary texts can bring into the language class, it is worth stating that teachers have a huge responsibility when choosing these and adapting them to suit their learners' needs. First and foremost, it is crucial to select texts that are not overly complex or beyond the learners' capacity to

understand. Especially in foreign language classes, literary texts should be deprived of too much stylistic complexity, otherwise the risk that the students will be overwhelmed and will most likely be frustrated and refuse to participate in any task.

There are different models of literary text exploration in language classes, but the one that corresponds to modern standards in language teaching is the Reader Response Approach (RRA), which is a constructivist approach and the reader is interacting with the text rather than focusing on the language dimension. The learners will bring about personal reactions, reflections and thus develop creativity and critical thinking, whereas the language skills are “taking care of themselves”. Thus, the learners give their own interpretations of the text, which also means there is no right or wrong answer, and in doing so they will be challenged to look for the necessary language structures to convey their communicative intent. The multitude of potential interpretations, opinions and reactions is conducive to meaning construction, productive interactions within the class, active involvement and collaboration. The teacher’s task in this context is not a superficial one. They act as facilitators in the course of activities, but the preparation phase is usually a time and energy consuming one, as the questions and the tasks should be higher order ones and generative of constructive discussions and controversial debates the final outcome being the gradual, but solid development of those four Cs in modern education.

### **Bibliography**

1. Crystal, D., *Style: The Varieties of English in the English Language*, pp.199-222.
2. Littlewood, W., *Literature in the School Foreign Language Course*, *Modern Languages*, 1975, 56/3, pp. 127-131.
3. Sivasubramanian, S., *Promoting the Prevalence of Literature in the Practice of Foreign and Second Language Education. Issues and Insights*, in *Asian EFL Journal*, 2006, 8/4, pp. 254-273.



4. Xerri, D., Xeri Agius, St., “the use of literature in ELT, Winter Journal, 2012, pp. 18-25.
5. Cruz, J., 2010, How Literature can influence the English Language Learning?, available at <https://blogs.funiber.org/formacionprofesorado/2010/10/08/how-literature-can-influence-the-english-language-learning>, accessed on February, 24, 2018.

## **EFFECTIVE ENGLISH TEACHING METHODS IN HIGHER EDUCATION.**

*Olga COVALIOVA, university lecturer*

### **Rezumat**

*Predarea este una din principalele componente ale planificării educaționale, care este un factor-cheie în realizarea planurilor educaționale. Cu toată importanța bunei predări, rezultatele sunt departe de a fi ideale. Studiul calitativ prezent urmărește investigarea predării eficiente a limbii engleze în învățământul superior, bazat pe experiențele celor mai buni profesori.*

### **What is the best teaching method for learning English?**

According to academic research, linguists have demonstrated that there is not one single best method for everyone in all contexts, and that not one teaching method is inherently superior to the others.

Also, it is not always possible – or appropriate – to apply the same methodology to all learners, who have different objectives, environments and learning needs.

An experienced professional language teacher always adopts the Principled Eclecticism approach, deciding on the most suitable techniques and applying the most appropriate methodology for that learner’s specific objectives, learning style and context [1, p. 1].

Methods of teaching English have developed rapidly, especially in the previous 40 years. As a language learner, training manager, or teacher, it is important to understand the various