Teaching lang skill via literature

by Nasrullah Fkip

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THE INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE ON EDUCATION OF LANGUAGE, LITERATURE, AND ARTS IN DIGITAL ERA

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ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

The development of science and technology brings with them the development in all aspects of human culture. Language, as an important aspect in human culture, evolves, shifts, or change at the same time of the development of science and technology. In turn, language as a medium of literature and art (especially music and drama) is also evolving, shifting, or changing. This condition resulted in a new paradigm in the study of language, literature, and art. Twenty-first century teaching is no longer about the four walls of the classroom. There was a time when learners of language, literature and arts had to rely almost solely on what went on within those walls. But there was before the coming of the digital age. Now thanks to the internet and the advent of digital media, a shift is happening in language learning moves into a new era. As today's learners belong to the Digital Age, teachers also must adapt to use technology and multimedia based learning resources to impart the functional teaching of language, literature, and arts.

As a consequence, innovative methods of Teaching Language, Literature, and Arts, especially communicative approach are urgently needed as it is the language of modern technology. It has been best understood in academic world that teachers should cater to the needs and learning styles of their students with 'knowledge thirst', since present day learners with varied learning exposure outside the classroom too, will lose interest on the monopoly of a formal teacher. A modern teacher needs not only to have a thorough understanding of the present day curriculum but also all the various methodologies, their merits and demerits, and how and when to apply each of the technique for students. They need to personalize their teaching based on the student's stage of life, objectives, motivation and aptitude for languages. In addition to these, language/literature/arts educators should update their knowledge, skills and acquire mastery over the language/literature/arts to meet with the demands of globalization. Along with the real interest in modifying himself in accordance with the changing needs of language/literature/arts learning, if modern language/literature/arts teachers use precisely the latest language teaching tools, with the support of technology, they can teach the subject-matter effectively and facilitate the students towards the new- era language learning. In line with the condition, it was necessary to conduct the international conference on education of language, literature and arts in digital era.

This First International Conference on Education of Language, Literature and Arts (ICELLA) 2018 was held by the Department of Language and Arts Education,

Faculty of Teacher Training and Education, Lambung Mangkurat University, Banjarmasin 27-28 July 2018 at Ario Barito Hotel Banjarmasin, South Kalimantan, Indonesia.

The theme of conference were represented by the keynote speaker and invited speakers in the following topics: (1) *Culture in Digital Era,* by the keynote speaker, Prof. Wahyu, M.S (Dean of Faculty of Teacher Training and Education, Lambung Mangkurat University Banjarmasin-Indonesia, (2) *Using Popular Culture to Optimize Indonesian as a Foreign Language (BIPA) Learning Contemplations and Experiences,* by Chistopher Allen Woodrich (Wikipedia Editor and Administrator and Candidate of Philosophy Doctor in Gadjah Mada University Yogyakarta-Indonesia, (3) *Researching Literature on the Internet: Findings New Meaning in Old Words,* by David John Rawson (Australian Embassy in Jakarta-Indonesia and Doctoral Program of Gadjah Mada University Yogyakarta-Indonesia), (4) *Coaching ESL Student Teachers to Become Innovative Teachers: Can We Engage, Empower and Emancipate Them*?, by Dr. Raja Nor Safinas Raja Harun (Teacher Educator at Universiti Pendidikan Sultan Idris, Tanjong Malim, Perak, Malaysia), (5) *ICT in Language Learning*: Resources, *Authoring Tools and Artificial Intelligent,* by Dr. Anuncius Gumawang Jati (English Lecturer of ITB Bandung-Indonesia), and (6) *The Art of Madihin Recitation: Profile of Banjar Traditional Oral Literature Performing Arts,* by Dr. Bambang Subiyakto (Lecturer of Lambung Mangkurat University Banjarmasin-Indonesia). Also, the theme was represented in the various topics of the parallel sessions. There are 49 papers presented in the conference. Those were classified into Language and Teaching, Literature and Teaching, Arts and Art Performance, and Cultural Studies. Researchers and practitioners are believed to have put their efforts in finding ways to teach language, literature and arts in the digital era. This conference introduced and discussed the various methods, techniques, strategies, and models of teaching of language, literature and arts. The conference was attended by 250 participants, including educators, policy makers, researchers, academics/lecturers, principals, supervisors, graduate students, practitioners, academics, professionals and teachers.

We would like to thank the organizing committee and the members of reviewers for their kind assistances in reviewing the papers. We would also like to extend our best gratitude to Rector of Lambung Mangkurat University Banjarmasin, Prof. Dr. Sutarto Hadi, M.s., MSc., Dean of Faculty of Teacher Training and Education, Prof. Dr. Wahyu, M.S for the tremendous support. Furthermore, we would like to thank Chistopher Allen Woodrich (Canada), David John Rawson (Australia), Dr. Raja Nor Safinas Raja Harun (Universiti Pendidikan Sultan Idris, Malaysia), Dr. Gumawang Jati (ITB Bandung), and Dr. Bambang Subiyakto (Lambung Mangkurat University, Banjarmasin). Also, to all the participants of the conference, thank you very much!

This international conference on education of language, literature, and arts (ICELLA) has been prepared and organized by Department of Education of Language

and Arts, in collaboration with Teaching English as a Foreign Language in Indonesia (TEFLIN) of Kalimantan Selatan and Himpunan Sasjana Kesusasteraan-Indonesia (HISKI) of Universitas Lambung Mangkurat.

Banjarmasin, August 6, 2018

Chairman,

Fatchul Mu'in

TEACHING LANGUAGE SKILLS THROUGH LITERATURE

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Abstract

Literature is the artwork which uses a language as its medium. Literary work cannot be separated from a language. In relation, teaching a language can be conducted through literature. Of course, the focus is on the teaching of language; literary work is determined as the means by which the language teaching can be well achieved. 'Language' learning is understood by writers advocating this approach in a number of ways: for some it is the mastery and application of the structures and forms of a pedagogical grammar and the acquisition of vocabulary; for others it is the development of communicative competence; still others are concerned with a more reflective knowledge about language or language awareness. This paper will discuss strategies of teaching language skills (listening, speaking, reading and writing) based on literary works (poetry, prose and drama), and in addition, to build the cultural awareness for English Department of Universitas Lambung Mangkurat.

Introduction

In the English language learning and teaching, there are four language skills to be developed: listening, speaking, reading and writing. In this paper, why and how a language teacher should use literary texts in the language classroom, what sort of literature language teachers should use with language learners, literature and the teaching of language skills, and benefits of different genres of literature to language teaching will be taken into account. Thus, the place of literature as a tool rather than an end in teaching English as a second or foreign language will be unearthed.

The material of literature is something very general, such as 'human life'. This implies that literature can deal with every human activity, or human experience. Some of these activities are peculiar, some are more widespread, and some are universal. Therefore, we should expect that literature is "the record of

human experience". As the record of human experience, literature may record may some aspects of human culture, expecially, of morality.

Based on the illustration above, literature can be used as medium to improve language skill and at the same it can be used to build human character. Learning literature is learning a language and at the same time the learners are made to be aware of morality.

The Use of Literature in Language Teaching

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, in translation courses, many language teachers make their students translate literary texts like drama, poetry and short stories into the other language. Since translation gives students the chance to practice the lexical, syntactic, semantic, pragmatic and stylistic knowledge they have acquired in other courses, translation both as an application area covering four basic skills and as the fifth skill is emphasized in language teaching. In the following section, why language teachers use literary texts in the foreign language classroom and main criteria for selecting suitable literary texts in foreign language classes are stressed so as to make the reader familiar with the underlying reasons and criteria for language teachers' using and selecting literary texts.

Literature is interesting and stimulating. It will allow a reader to imagine worlds they are not familiar with. This is done through the use of descriptive language. In order to understand, the reader will create their vision of what the writer is saying. In this sense, the reader becomes a performer or an actor in a communicative event as they read. Using literature versus a communicative textbook (conversational English) changes the learning approach from learning *how to say* into learning *how to mean* (grammar vs. creative thinking).

There are four main reasons which lead a language teacher to use literature in the classroom. These are valuable authentic material, cultural enrichment, language enrichment and personal involvement. In addition to these four main reasons, universality, non-triviality, personal relevance, variety, interest, economy and suggestive power and ambiguity are some other factors requiring the use of literature as a powerful resource in the classroom context.

Valuable Authentic Material

Literature is authentic material. Most works of literature are not created for the primary purpose of teaching a language. Many authentic samples of language in real-life contexts (i.e. travel timetables, city plans, forms, pamplets, cartoons,

advertisements, newspaper or magazine articles) are included within recently developed course materials. Thus, in a classroom context, learners are exposed to actual language samples of real life / real life like settings. Literature can act as a beneficial complement to such materials, particularly when the first "survival" level has been passed. In reading literary texts, because students have also to cope with language intended for native speakers, they become familiar with many different linguistic forms, communicative functions and meanings.

Cultural Enrichment

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, play, or 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 the foreign learner to feel for 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 the foreign learner's understanding into the country whose language is being learned. Also, literature adds a lot to the cultural grammar of the learners.

Language Enrichment

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 text. They learn about the syntax and discourse functions of sentences, the variety of possible structures, the 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 are trying 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.

Personal Involvement

Literature can be useful in the language learning process owing to the personal involvement it fosters in the reader.Once the student reads a literary text, he begins to inhabit the text. He is drawn into the text. Understanding the meanings of lexical items or phrases becomes less significant than pursuing the development of the story. The student becomes enthusiastic to find out what happens as events unfold via the climax; he feels close to certain characters and shares 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 the students is evident. In this process, he can remove the identity crisis and develop into an extrovert (Journal of Language and Linguistic Studies Vol.1, No.1, April 2005).

The non-English student who reads English well may have no difficulty in understanding denotations. However, he may find that sometimes the words bring to him different meanings or associations. Mastering a language is a matter of degree; and knowing the meanings of all the words may be not anough for a full response to literature. The first step in understanding a word is to know its denotative meaning. The next step is how to understand its connotation.

Literature, Reading and Writing

Reading skill can be developed from reading literary work. Reading literary work is more beneficial than reading non-literary work. This is because the former shows specific forms, diction and collection of the given language; it also shows a kind of creative, emaginative and simbolic written work. Reading literary work is not meant to understand the denotative meaning but at the same time it is meant to find out the connotative meaning. This is to say, reading the literary work is meant to understand what is explicitely and implicitely stated in the work.

English teachers should adopt a dynamic, student-centered approach toward comprehension of a literary work. In reading lesson, discussion begins at the literal level (denotative meaning) 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 (connotative meaning), 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. 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 English, 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.

Literature, Speaking, and Listening

Listening skill can be developed through literary works. The learners are exposed to recorded literary works or those that are read loudly. Using these, they can acquire how the language is spoken. In the other words, they can acquire knowledge on pronunction according to the sound systems of the target language.

The pronunction problem is one of the problems in learning English. The problem is often faced by the learners because (1) since they were children, they were used to produce speech sounds in their own language, (2) their habits to produce speech sounds in their own language make them difficult to produce in the other language, and (3) there are different sound systems in the two languages (native and foreign languages).

Through listening activity, the learners can improve their pronunciation in foreign language (English) by imitating the foreign language texts. The texts may be taken from the literary work. This activity of learning may result in improving not only pronunciation but also intonation, stress, vocabulary mastery and sentence patterns, which are, in turn, useful for developing writing and speaking competences.

The study of literature in a language class, though being mainly associated with reading and writing, can play an equally meaningful role in teaching both speaking and listening. Oral reading, dramatization, improvisation, role-playing, reenactment, discussion, and group activities may center on a work of literature (Stern 1991:337).

Speaking skill can be developed through the activities of reading and listening to literary works such as poetry and fiction prose. A teacher may ask his student to read the texts and at the same time the other students listen to it. Then, each student is asked to make an oral report based what has been read or listened

to. But the most appropriate literary work is drama. Drama consists of dialogues. By using a role play technique, drama may be used for developing speaking skill.

Conclusion

Literature is a kind of the artworks that uses a language as its medium. Therefore, it can be used for developing language skills: listening, speaking, reading and writing. Because, literature also talks about human life and offers moral values, learning and teaching literature may result two positive impacts: developing language skills and promoting moral values. If we do so, both learners and teachers are expected to be aware of character building.

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