

# Using literature texts in teaching English as a foreign language



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## The beginnings of using literature in ELT



- The Communicative language teaching method gives credit of the **authentic language** taken as language written by specialists for specialists (Jordan, 1997). Literature language is deemed as authentic material.
- The usage of literature texts cannot be very useful if only taken as tools to improve students' knowledge in the language. Other components are needed but literature should be an essential tool in teaching English as a foreign language. The goal of the language teacher is to help students understand and produce spoken and written texts.

# Theoretical approaches of using literature in English language teaching



There are various reasons for using literature in ELT:

-language in literature texts is taken as a valuable source of authentic language and expands the language awareness

-lessons which involve literature in teaching and learning provoke interaction, discussion, critical thinking and educates the persons' personality and it is motivating

Theories on which the paper is based:

1. The theory of Stephen D. Krashen – *second language acquisition*
2. The *extensive reading* approach
3. The principle of *authenticity*

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## Learning and improving vocabulary

- According to Krashen, you have to "live in the country" to achieve any real proficiency in a 2<sup>nd</sup> language, and that the informal real world environment is always superior to the classroom, or formal environment, but it is also confirmed that classroom does help after all.
- The case when one talks to a native speaker or a person with a proficiency level in English language, students deem that they are inferior to the situation and they cannot find the appropriate vocabulary.

## What is literature?

- Literature means those ***novels, short stories, plays and poems*** which convey their message by paying considerable attention to ***language*** which is ***rich*** and ***multilayered***



## Using literature in ELT and criteria for selecting materials

The main reason to use literature in the ELT is to make the lessons interactive where students can improve their communicative skills and enhance their critical thinking abilities.

According to Duff and Maley, there are three main reasons for using literature:

- **Linguistic**, because in reading literature the learners gain knowledge of different linguistic units such as irony, exposition, argument, narration, etc.
- **Methodological**, because when reading students can develop reading and comprehension and also become creative and imaginative. However, it is important the teacher to choose the appropriate material for the learners
- **Motivational**, because most often students sometimes consider literary texts more interesting than the texts in their course-books and the reason for that lies in the outdated texts which do not catch the students' attention

# The disadvantages of using literature in ELT



Although, there are many advantages there are certain exclusions to the assertions made before. According to Sullivan, there are two problems connected to literature and its usage in language teaching (Sullivan, 1991):

- a) Linguistic difficulty of the text is one of the major arguments against using literature in the language classes
- b) Learners may need a lot of background knowledge about English language and culture to interpret some texts

# Concluding remarks



- Problems with the grading the grammar and vocabulary component
- Facing difficulties can make students think that the effort will be never worth
- The idiomatic language can be outdated
- Sometimes the literary texts are too high level
- Problems with cultural references in terms of comprehension

**IT IS A POSITIVE CHALLENGE FOR BOTH STUDENTS AND TEACHERS - LITERATURE TEXTS GIVE A LOT OF POSSIBILITIES FOR CRITICAL THINKING, CREATIVITY AND OF COURSE KNOWLEDGE AND BETTER RESULTS IN THE TARGET LANGUAGE.**

THANK YOU FOR  
YOUR ATTENTION