LITERATURE IN EFL CLASSROOM: AN OVERVIEW OF BENEFITS, APPROACHES AND PRACTICES

"Great literature is simply language charged with meaning to the utmost possible degree." Ezra Pound

Hayriye AVARA

1. Introduction

Literature - as defined by merriam-webster online dictionary – is a collection of "writings in prose or verse- especially, writings having excellence of form or expression and expressing ideas of permanent or universal interest". The 'writings' are defined by various dictionary entries as 'stories, poems, and plays that have value as art'. Similar to the view of Basnet & Mounfold, many scholars would agree on the explanation of literature as having a value of art whose texts mirror various features of society as well as being cultural documents that provide better understanding of a society (in Burhanuddn, 2018). Language - no matter if it is spoken or written - has various discourse types. Language teachers aim to present as many as possible of these discourse types as it is evident that introducing a variety of discourse types creates the possibility of having a multi-dimensional language learning model.

In the light of these, since 1980s, with the promotion of use of authentic materials in language classes, literature has gained a significant role in setting real examples of language use and in developing student's awareness over English language. Thus, there has been a significant interest in the study of literature and culture, underlying the importance of the relationship between literature, language and education.

The significance of incorporating literary text into English as a Foreign Language (EFL) classroom has been revealed by through numerous studies by various researchers. Most scholars agree on the diverse benefits of implementing literary text in the EFL curricula. To give an example, Sage (1987) focused on the importance of literature in enabling students' engagement in meaningful communication. To Moody (1971), literature can be applied in any language methodology (cited in Khan and Alasmari, 2018). Hall (2001) emphasizes the natural aspect, the normality of the language of literature and that it is the 'normal' language that gains poetic nature through literature. According to Balakian (1977), the language of literature plays as an important role as a bridge between the real world and 'subjective state'. Collie and Slater (1990) highlight the value of literary texts as being fruitful authentic material, enriching language use via significant personal engagement providing cultural enhancement. Literature brings enrichment in the language class, for it connects the learners with the natural language, which is defined as the 'language at its finest' (Khan and Alasmari, 2018). Various studies focus on the numerous benefits of literary texts as an important part of the EFL programs.

In this sense, the study aims to review ideas about the role of literature in the EFL classroom, how literature enriches the overall learning experience, and it also aim to introduce various approaches to integration of literature in the classroom.

2. Historical Background

Literature, as a natural reflection of its artistic value, beholds the best model of language use. The language of literature is authentic, genuine as resemblance of the language to the real

world. It offers all levels of language from the simple conversation to the elevated, sophisticated use of language in context.

With the changes and trends in the field of language teaching and learning in the last century, the role of literature has also witnessed significant changes. As explained by Stern (1985), literary texts have been part of the non-English speaking countries' curriculum for over 100 years. Literature - acting as the main source of the teaching material - was crucial at the beginning of 20th century. As Stern (1985) writes, use of literary texts in language goes back in the history when the Grammar Translation Method practiced the translation of literary texts as fruitful authentic materials. Therefore, in the era of Grammar Translation Method, literature was used mainly as the source of input in language education. According to Duff and Maley (1990), however, literary texts were mainly applied as texts which set good examples of grammar rules. Therefore, the focus of Grammar Translation Method was mainly on mastering grammar structures and vocabulary. The literary, artistic value and the content of the text were disregarded. The period of structuralism and audiolingual method, on the other hand, minimised the use of literature in the language classroom (Collie & Slater, 1987).

The use and the function of literature throughout the century is summarised by Kramsch and Kramsch (2000) as follows: in 1910s it was taken into consideration for aesthetic education of a small number, and in the 1920s for the literacy of a bigger number, 'for moral and vocational uplift' in 1930s–1940s, for theoretical purpose in 1950s, content related to humanism in 1960s–1970s, and as 'authentic' material in the target language in 1980s–1990s. Thus, except for Grammar-Translation Method, literature was left to dust on the shelves for several decades. Short (1996) named the disconnection as 'border dispute over territory', which led, according to Carter and McRae (1996), the disconnection of the teaching of language and literature as two pedagogic practices (cited in Khan and Alasmari, 2018).

It is evident that the value of literary texts in language education was neglected for several decades in the twentieth century. The first half of the 1960s represents a turning point in this sense. The importance of literary texts in language teaching and learning process was highlighted during a conference in Cambridge in 1963. The traditional approach was criticized for its incapacity to develop language skills and communicative abilities. In the mid-1980s, the public concern was that language learners lacked basic content knowledge and skills (Stern, 1985).

Regardless of these attempts, the focus continued to be mainly on teaching language skills until the 1980s and 1990s - when the use of literary texts started to gain importance thanks, especially, to the promotion of the use of authentic materials within the frame of the Communicative Approach to language teaching.

Thus, for the last few decades, literary texts, as genuine and authentic source of information and knowledge, have gained a significant status as real and powerful materials for teaching English in the classrooms with students from different ages and proficiency levels. Recently, various aspects of literature and language education is being researched, focusing on different aspects of literature in language education. Some research topics related to literature and language education can be listed as follows; however, it is not limited to these: the role and significance of culture and literature in language education or use of literature in material

development for language education, or the influence of literature on language learner, and the interaction between the learner and the literary text.

3. Benefits of Using Literature in the Language Classroom

There is a distinction- made by McRae (1994)- between literature with a capital *L* (the classical texts written by Shakespeare, Dickens, Shaw and so on) and literature with a small **l**, which includes popular fiction, fables, song lyrics and similar texts. At present, the kind of the text used is the EFL classrooms is not limited to recognised texts from certain countries, like England or the Unites States of America; instead, texts from various countries introducing a diversity of cultures and examples of different forms of language use. The kinds of the text could be chosen from various genres from short stories, poems, novels, plays to song lyrics. The texts could be studied either in their original forms or a simplified-or abridged- versions.

Literature is a significant source of language, filled with all types of language use, representing various life experiences filled with all kinds of feelings and emotions. Hence, the study of literature is very important to understand the world that we live in with its unlimited characters, their perspectives, and the variety of the language use.

Teaching about the language and helping the learners to be able to use the language in various communicative situations appropriately are two different practices. Thus, a gap between the information about the language and the ability to use it naturally and appropriately for communication is often observed. One effective way to overcome this gap, that is, to help students bridge the information about the language and the ability to use it spontaneously and meaningfully for communication is to include authentic materials, which exemplify language of real life, in social content, in the language teaching/learning process. Literature - as one of the best sources of the social context, with its unlimited examples of language use for communicative purposes - could be utilised to bridge this gap between knowing about the language and the ability to use it spontaneously.

The significance of integration of literary texts in language education has been supported by various scholars and a great deal of positive results of related research has demonstrated that integrating literature in the curriculum offers various benefits. According to Lazar (1993), for instance, literature sharpens linguistic and cognitive skills and enhances students' understanding of the human condition. Related to the factors supporting the integration of literary texts into the language curriculum, Horner (1983) suggested a model based on three fields and these three fields help students' growth as whole persons (Bobkina, 2014). Homer's suggested fields that support personal growth is listed by Bobkina (2014) as follows:

    i. *Aesthetic*: It focuses on the reading process and how students are involved in the process aesthetically.

    ii. *Psycholinguistic*: It is related to the students' 'identification and internalization of certain behaviour patterns.'

    iii. *Socio-moral*: It focuses on the issues related to the theme and content.

Duff and Maley (1990) listed the benefits of the use of literature in the language classroom from a different perspective and their categorization can be listed as follows:

i. Linguistic Value:

The focus is on the importance of literature as a real, authentic material which serves and offers a variety of text types and various uses of language. To Maley (1989) language of literature contains all possible real language register and unlimited subject matters.

ii. Methodological Value:

It is related to different layers of meaning, possible interpretations and opinions triggered by the literary text. This creates a chance for students to interact with each other in a meaningful way as noted by Kern (2000).

iii. Motivational Value:

It refers to the motivating nature of the literary texts with their authentic value, to promote the motivation of students and to explore their feelings within the frame of the meaningful contexts (Ghosn, 2002; Van, 2009).

As Lazar (1993) explains, literary texts help "to stimulate the imagination of students, to develop their critical abilities, and to increase their emotional awareness" (p. 19). Lazar (1993, pp. 14-15) notes various benefits of literature and the reasons why it is significant in language education:

- *It is very motivating.*

- *It is authentic material.*

- *It has general educational value.*

- *It is found in many syllabuses.*

- *It helps students to understand another culture.*

- *It is a stimulus for language acquisition.*

- *It develops students' interpretive abilities.*

- *Students enjoy it and it is fun.*

- *It is highly valued and has a high status.*

- *It expands students' language awareness.*

- *It encourages students to talk about their opinions and feelings.*

The single fact of decoding the meaning of separate lexical units or phrases does not seem to be especially relevant itself. Students usually get engaged in the plot of the story, commonly feeling close to their favourite characters. In addition to the benefits given above, Maley (2001) also lists several other advantages of use of literature in language education as follows:

• *Universality:*

All languages have oral or written literature. They share universal topics such as love, friendship, happiness, sadness, greed, and so on, and these are common to all cultures.

• *Non-triviality*:

Majority of traditional forms of language input include language in unreal, artificial contexts which are not very attractive for students. Yet, literature presents authentic input, rather than trivializing.

• *Personal Relevance:*

The content of literary texts conveys ideas, feelings and emotions that has a link with readers' experience. This connection with the texts promotes the learning process.

• *Variety*:

Literary texts offer a huge variety of subject matter and include all the probable varieties of the language use.

• *Interest:*

Since the topics and themes treated in literary works are part of the global human experience, they are intrinsically interesting for readers.

• *Economy and Suggestive Power/Imaginative power:*

The imaginative, suggestive power of literature is evident, and it travels far beyond the written text. This powerful feature is a facilitator for motivation in class.

Ambiguity:

The ambiguous nature of literature creates the possibility of mining for meaning and sets the scene for class debates.

The benefits of literature in language education are not limited to above examples. Similar or additional advantages of literature in the language classroom are introduced by various other scholars. For instance, Das (2014) also makes a list of the benefits of literature as follows:

Cultural enrichment: Literature cultivates the cultural knowledge and cultural awareness.

Mental training: One of the best ways to train the mind is through literature.

Memorability: Some literary texts, especially, poetry and songs' lyrics, are easy to memorise, which could act as a 'memorised archive of linguistic usage' (Maley & Moulding, 1985).

Rhythmic resource: Poems are ideal for comprehending the rhythms of a language (Maley & Moulding, 1985).

Open to interpretation: Literature as being open to interpretation promotes 'genuine interaction' between language learners (Duff & Maley, 1990).

Convenience: It is easy to photocopy and use literature as classroom material (Das, 2014).

In addition, Bobkina (2014) lists some other benefits from emotional intelligence to critical thinking; enhancement promoted by the recent developments in the fields of sociolinguistics, pragmatics, semiotics, discourse analysis, and psycholinguistics.

4. Approaches to Using Literature in EFL Classroom

There are different theories on literature teaching; however, which approach or model to be used in the EFL classroom depends on various factors. Depending on the objectives, teachers

choose the best model. While some emphasise on the stylistic features, some others prefer to focus on students' personal feelings and opinion (Bobkina, 2014). Keeping these approaches in mind is important for teachers so as to choose the best way to benefit from literature in their classroom.

4.1. A language-based approach to using literature

Carter and Long (1991) add another perspective to Maley's categorization and introduce three main models for literature teaching to be adapted in the EFL classroom: i) the cultural model, ii) the language model and the iii) personal growth model.

i. The Cultural Model

The focus is on language as a cultural artifact, learners are expected to analyse a literary text from social, political, literary, and historical perspectives. Literary text is taken as a product. That is, it is viewed as a source of information, a window opening to the culture of the target language. This model is commonly used at tertiary level as one of the most traditional models. It reflects all aspects of culture from social, political, to historical content. There is no specific language analysis done on the text.

ii. The Language Model

The Language Model expects the literary text to offer language development and awareness. Within this model, the literary text is considered as a rich linguistic source of language use in context. Linguistic features are systematically practiced through a variety of activities rather than paying attention to reader-text interaction and the literary quality of the text. The language model is more learner centred. Thus, learners are expected to examine the text, by paying attention to how language is used. Stylistic analysis is used for paying more attention on the structure and vocabulary. It requires close study of the linguistic features for meaningful interpretations of the text – its goal is to help learners read and study literature more competently.

iii. The Personal Growth Model

This Model focuses mainly on personal growth in parallel to the language learning and cultural awareness by prioritising the learner's own response to and interaction with the text, placing their feelings, ideas and opinions in the centre. Personal experience as a means to engage students in the reading process is highly valued and has the priority (Carter & Long, 1991). The Personal Growth Model encourages learners to refer to their own experiences, opinion and feelings. It promotes as much interaction as possible between the text and the reader, encouraging the learners to 'make the text their own'. This model underlines the power that literature has to move people and aims to make use of this strength of literature in the English language classroom.

4.2. Stylistic Approach

Stylistics, which shares the characteristics of the Language Model, involves the close study of the literary text. The target is to encourage students to create meaningful interpretations of the text. Another aim of Stylistic Approach is to help students gain more knowledge and awareness of the language in general. Thus, it enables students to have a lot of language

practice. Stylistics provides learners with an illustration of various linguistic forms, and their function to convey specific message. Language learners have the chance to improve and deepen their knowledge of English through close study of the text.

4.3. Literature as Content

Literature carries the content within itself. The same as the Cultural Model, it focuses on the subjects from the social, political, and historical background to a text; literary genres and rhetorical devices, the features of literary movements and so on. Language acquisition is aimed through focusing on content through reading texts and literary criticism relating to them. Texts are selected for their importance as part of a literary canon or tradition. This approach is advantageous as it exposes learners to a wide range of authentic materials and encourages education through understanding of the texts within their literary and historical context.

4.4. The Critical Literary Approach by Maley (1989)

Maley's Critical Literary Approach focuses on the plot, characterization, psychology, background, literary concepts and so on. In order to be able to deal with literature using Maley's critical approach, students' levels need to be at least intermediate. In addition to proficiency level, knowledge of literary terms and conventions need to be mastered by the students.

4.5. Integrative Approach to Literature

There has been more focus on the possible ways to integrate different approaches to enhance the language learning process by adding diverse possibilities with various perspectives through integrating different approaches. In this sense, Dhanapal (2010) suggest a possible way to blend the two approaches to have a 'complete whole'. The Reader Response Approach (which underlines the importance of the role of the reader paving the way to a close interaction between reader and the text) and Stylistic Analysis Approach (which aims to analyse the characteristics of the language of literature to promote students' awareness of literature) can be considered as two models applied to literary analysis that focus on the significance of the participation of the reader. This type of approach that integrates different approaches can be considered as an activity-based approach. Undoubtedly, as a result of active engagement in activities, students tend to become more successful in problem solving and they learn better as they are given more opportunities. Therefore, it is evident that the implementation of integrated approach has a positive impact on language learning progress (Dhanapal, 2010).
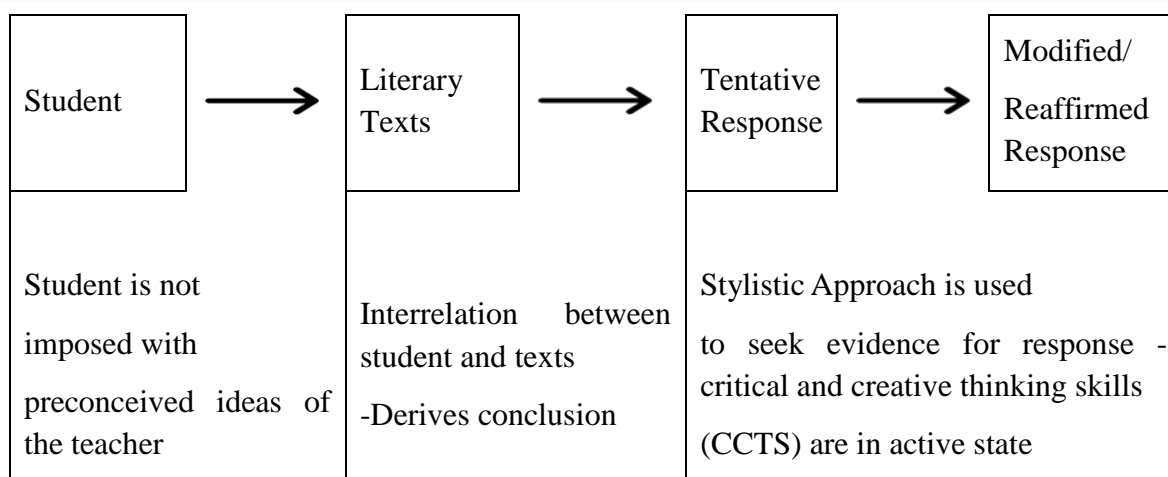
Student	Literary Texts	Tentative Response	Modified/ Reaffirmed Response
Student is not imposed with preconceived ideas of the teacher	Interrelation between student and texts -Derives conclusion	Stylistic Approach is used to seek evidence for response - critical and creative thinking skills (CCTS) are in active state	

Figure 1: Integrated Approach Process (cited in Dhanapal, 2010)

4.5.1. Tasmanian's Integrative Model (2012): Five Perspective Approach

Tasmanian Integrative Model, created by some scholars in Australia, was introduced to be used mainly for L1 classes; however, the model is believed to be a promising one to be applied in FLE classroom, for this model suggests the social, cultural and literary analysis of the text in addition to the linguistic point of view (Bobkina, 2014).

4.6. Lucas Text Type Approach (1990)

Lucas (1990) divided texts into two major types: *artistic* and *functional*. To Lucas, artistic texts include texts that have artistic value and functional texts consist of texts other than the artistic and they comprise six categories as demonstrated in the figure below (Figure 2):

Artistic texts	Functional texts
• novels • short stories • essays • poems • plays	1. Casual texts such as newspapers, magazines, and non-fiction 2. Personal texts, for instance, letters and diaries. 3. Transactional texts: business letters, legal documents and reports. 4. Reference texts, for example, dictionaries, catalogues, directories and inventories. 5. Pedagogical texts include textbooks and encyclopaedias. 6. Academic texts such as research papers, theses, specialist books and journals.

Figure 2: Adapted from Lucas' (1990) Division of Text Types

4.7. Periphrastic Approach

It is related to the studying of the surface meaning of the text. Teachers can use less complicated words and sentence structures compared to the difficult words and structures in the texts. Also, if needed, the teacher can translate the text into their native language. This approach can be appropriate to use with low levels, like beginner groups, for it could be an aid to defining the expectations of the author's piece of work.

5. Criteria for Selecting Literary Texts

Selecting an appropriate literary text for use in the EFL classroom is essential as the text plays the key role as the teaching material. Criteria for selecting a literary text for EFL classroom are based on students' motivation, the length and content of the text, linguistic difficulty, students' cultural background and finally students' interests as well as their language level (Collie & Slater, 1987; Hismanoglu, 2005; Lazar, 1993).

Rief and Heimburg (1996) underline the significance of text selection by writing how important it is to select a text that has a captivating value to attract learners' interest, promote their creativity, encourage critical thinking and to 'make meaningful connection' (cited in Piotrovská, 2009).

Lazar (1993), on the other hand, suggests a scale that could be referred to in order to check the appropriateness of a literary text chosen to be used in the EFL. Lazar's scale includes the following criteria:

Criteria	The reason why it is important
The age of students	Students' age should be taken into consideration: they should not be too old or too young to enjoy the text.
Intellectual maturity of students	Intellectual maturity is also a significant factor that should be considered, for students should not be too immature to understand the text or too mature/developed intellectually to find the text challenging enough.
Emotional understanding of students	Emotional understanding of the students is also significant as they can be either too immature to relate to the text or too developed to find the text engaging.
Linguistic proficiency of students	Their linguistic level affects motivation as their linguistic proficiency could be too advanced to find the text challenging or their level may be too elementary to cope with the text.
Literary background of students	Their previous experience with literature might be too well-developed to find the text challenging or it could be insufficient to find the text engaging.
Students' interests/hobbies	Students' interests and hobbies might be far removed from themes/content of the text to find the text engaging, or vice versa- close enough to be engaged in it.
Students' cultural background	Students' cultural background might be too remote from the text to help comprehension or close enough to the text for easy comprehension.

Figure 3: Text Selection Criteria (Adapted from Lazar (1993, p. 19)

As demonstrated in Figure 3, Lazar suggests some criteria to be followed when selecting a text for a particular group of EFL students. Some of these basic criteria include linguistic difficulty of the text, students' cultural background, the length of the text, availability of the text and connection with syllabus, whose significance is explained further as follows:

5.1. Linguistic difficulty

The selection of the suitable text for the level is vital as students need to be able to cope with it. Duff and Maley (1992) suggest a gradual increase in the level of difficulty of the text.

	Text Level	Task Level
Stage 1	simple text	low level task
Stage 2	simple text	more demanding task
Stage 3	difficult text	low level task
Stage 4	difficult task	more demanding task

Figure 4: level of difficulty of the text & task in different stages (adapted from Duff and Maley, 1992)

Duff and Maley (1992) suggest, as it can be observed in the figure above (Figure 4), during the first stage, an easy text can be used with an easy task. In the next level, the text can still be easy, but the task level is elaborated. Level three introduces a difficult text with an easy task. And in the fourth level, a difficult text is used with a more difficult task. In this way, the text and the task become demanding gradually, avoiding discouragement.

5.2. Students' cultural background

Taking the cultural background of students into consideration might not always require choosing a text with familiar culture. Sometimes even a strikingly different, new topic or experience introduced by the text could be very motivating as it creates curiosity and offers new adventures, new ideas and new perspectives. With the appropriate selection of the text, the remotest can be comprehended as the closest, yet the opposite could be the case with the selection of inappropriate text. Thus, the intellectual range of the learners should be taken into consideration.

5.3. The length of the text

Since the length of the text is important when the time and related issues are considered, choosing an appropriate text to be covered in the planned teaching period is important to be able to complete the task. Sometimes good planning and appropriate choices help to overcome with the length of the text. Also, a well-chosen extract from a longer text can be

used as a very resourceful piece of material. Furthermore, a quote from a longer literary work could be used as a practical, convenient literary material. In addition, students can do some of the reading as an extensive reading task that could be supported by in class activities.

5.4. Availability of the text

In terms of availability of a copy, finance and other related factors, students should have an easy access to the text chosen.

5.5. Connection with syllabus

To Lazar (1993), the teacher should consider the ways of linking the literary task to the syllabus to strengthen the content and to create a change to support the texts and task with the rest of the syllabus.

6. Literature and Classroom Application

Integration of literature offers various benefits in language learning process as it has been proved and documented by the research in the field. In the light of the positive impact of use of literature, there have been several practices and suggestions of implementation of literary genres in language classroom in general, and in EFL context. The classroom applications of literature to teach different skills and application of various genres could briefly be explained as follows:

6.1. Using Literature to Teach Language Skills

6.1.1. Literature in Teaching Listening

Providing students with authentic material when practicing listening skill is essential, and as Mckay (2001) explains, literature offers an excellent atmosphere and examples of real language used in every genuine situation as well as introduction of various dialects. Jacobs (1990) suggests the use of literary text during listening practice to promote intellectual and emotional involvement of learners in a higher level (cited in Khan & Alasmari, 2018) Hall and Williams (2000) recommend reading out to learners regularly, claiming that this practice is more influential compared to other activities in EFL class. It is agreed by many scholars that reading children's stories as well as children's books promote learners' ability to create visual image in their minds which help them to remember the story line and characters and related events accurately. Khan and Alasmari (2018) documents various findings that support use of literature to stimulate learners' listening skills. For instance, Hoag (1996) promotes the use of literature to practice listening skills as it creates a chance for students to gain awareness of beauty of the sound and rhythm of music as well as the ability they develop to visualize the characters' mood, atmosphere. Stephens and Brown (2000) write about the benefits of reading aloud and storytelling. Through reading aloud, curiosity and involvement are created (Paley, 1990).

6.1.2. Literature in Teaching Speaking

As in the nature of the speaking, it is a skill that requires active production and oral production (Widdowson, 1994). It is through speaking skills that individuals are able to practice oral communication. According to Khamkhien (2010), speaking skill holds a very important place in language learning. As emphasised by Hismanoglu (2005), activities related

to drama are valuable to practice in EFL and ESL classes. Including as many dramatic activities as possible as part of language teaching is significant to create various situations where students can take parts/roles and use the spoken language actively. There are various possibilities of making use of activities through dramatization, role-playing and improvisation, Students can be asked to write their own plays/scripts in groups and then they can act them out. Besides, there are various activities that promote improvisation allowing students to practice speaking skills in a creative and enjoyable atmosphere. Such activities also give students a chance to combine literature and their creative skills. Additionally, drama activities encourage students to assume real life roles; thus, to use the language in context.

Khan and Alasmari (2018) note that speaking activities like debate and role-play could be applied in EFL classes. Harmer (1984), on the other hand, focuses on the self-esteem gained through speaking activities promoted through the literary text. In addition to above examples of speaking activities, encouraging students to make presentations on their favourite books, or favourite literary characters is, undoubtedly, a very good practice to improve speaking skills through literature.

6.1.3. Literature in Teaching Reading

Numerous studies show how literature promotes reading development and achievement. Literary texts have positive impact on the motivation of learners' attitudes towards reading. As it is noted by Langer (1997), reading literary texts helps students gain ability to question, make interpretation and exploration and connection, as well as gaining new perspectives through the experience of new 'horizons of possibility' (Khan & Alasmari, 2018).

Literary texts are valuable materials to promote students' engagement in the text and to enable them to go beyond the scope of the text by adding meanings to it through adding their own beliefs and experiences. Hismanoglu (2005) notes that literature could be beneficial in promoting the reading skills as the students are absorbed into the text trying to follow the story line, identifying with some characters, becoming part of the text. Ozkan and Tongur (2014) focus on the positive impact reading literary text have on language learners. Brumfit and Carter (1986) explain that either through extensive or intensive reading literary texts, students are exposed to lexical items that are embedded within natural linguistic applications. The experience helps them conceive meaning in a way similar to the experience of the native speakers. Besides, various benefits listed above are promoted through the reading of literary texts. For instance, the experience educates the whole person, helping the students gain interpretive skills and become familiar with the cultural background. In doing so, students expand their horizons as well as practising linguistic knowledge. Similarly, Mckay (1982) also notes the benefits of literature in improving reading skills.

What makes literary texts valuable reading resources is that they provide the students with almost endless possibilities of creating meaning. That is, often literary texts offer multiple layers of meaning to create curiosity and to trigger students' willingness to read more to dig up more. The opportunity of reading between the lines and even beyond the lines promotes the interpretive skills and paves the way to imaginative experiences. Needless to say, the more students read, the deeper they become intellectually, leading to gaining more self-esteem. Like a domino effect, the intellectual growth as a whole person, gained through the

exploration of literary texts, creates the chances of personal growth, as an individual decorated with positive effects gained through the experience of the journey within the literary texts.

6.1.4. Literature in Teaching Writing

Literature offers inspiration to EFL/ESL learners as a valuable material with rich topics and creative and great models. Language learners follow the style and model of the literary text that set good examples for them to imitate. Literary texts also set them good examples of content and style. As noted by Hişmanoğlu (2005), a variety of contents, themes, styles and so on promote students' creative writing skills. Moreover texts set perfect examples of figurative language, idioms, proverbs and rich use of styles and vocabulary.

In addition, literary texts as a rich resource for writing practice can be utilised in practicing writing skill in various tasks. To illustrate, interpretation and criticism of the text can promote writing based on interpretive skills. Additionally, students could be encouraged to write creatively relating to the text. A variety of tasks, such as writing an alternative ending to the story or changing one part of the story, or expressing their feelings and thoughts towards the text, writing a creative piece in a different genre, or writing through the perspective of one of the characters and many others, can be designed to promote creative writing skills.

6.2. Using Different Genres in Language Classroom

As literature has different genres, when dealing with any genre, it is important to perceive what the peculiarities of the specific genre are and how they are studied.

6.2.1. Using Short Stories

Sage (1987) focuses on the attractive quality of the short stories as it successfully reflects real life (cited in Khan & Alasmari, 2018). Short stories are ideal to be covered within the limited classroom time. The appropriate text which is chosen carefully could be an ideal and precious source to promote language learning by applying various approaches used in studying literary text in EFL classroom. Short stories offer rich examples of language use, as well as the motivation offered by literary devices. The chain of the events, the twist of the plot, the suspense, climax, unexpected ending, symbols, themes and many more are excellent to practice the target language in various ways, through different approaches chosen depending on the aims and objectives.

Based on the views of various researchers, Khan and Alasmari (2018) note that short stories are accepted as captivating and ideal source of language model as well as enjoyment. In addition to the positive qualities mentioned above, short stories offer some other advantages as follows:

Short stories:

- *are short in length,*
- *have clarity and simplicity,*
- *cater for different tastes and interests,*
- *offer vast and varied topics*

6.2.2. Using Poetry

According to Maley and Duff (1989), poetry illustrates a wide range of semantic use of language; hence, it offers a rich source in the classroom. Benton et al (1990) note that the main aim of including poetry in language lessons is to help students to use the language actively and creatively. The significant characteristics of poems that cultivate the language practice are listed as follows in Khan and Alasmari (2018): The language of poems bears characteristics like being emotive, emotional, metalingual, or referential. Hence, poetry offers empathy, moves the emotions, the artistic use of language creates motivation to search for the metalingual function of the language, like a word play or linguistic ambiguity created in the text. The benefits of poetry explained by Sage (1987) include: linguistics; educational; cultural; emotional and aesthetic learning.

In addition to beneficial characteristics of using poems in the EFL classroom, Lazar (1993) offers different activities to be applied when dealing with poems. To illustrate, the activity of asking students to brainstorm word associations, analysing the symbolic meaning of a word and dealing with figurative meanings. Khan and Alasmari (2018) introduces some strategies to be followed when studying a poem: such as writing discussion questions related to a poem; selecting a challenging sentence that includes figurative language; exploring the meaning of difficult words; connecting with the poem by a focus on the personal experience, feelings and emotion.

6.2.3. Using Drama

Use of drama in EFL classroom offers several opportunities and benefits to the learners, especially to practice speaking skills. For instance, introducing drama as a literary text gives a chance to students to take part in and to become active participants, which enables them to practice the real-life genuine use in context, recreating real-life conversations. It could be defined as a simulation of life, of the real-life language use.

Creative drama - sometimes referred to as Educational Drama - together with games, offers dynamic activities such as icebreakers, brainteasers, improvisation and role-play (Davies, 1990). As explained by Saricoban (2004), drama promotes the comprehension of the real-world through a 'deeper linguistic world'. Lenore (1993), on the other hand, makes a list of benefits of drama as follows. Drama promotes:

- *creative thinking,*
- *language development,*
- *listening skills,*
- *new outlook for teaching,*
- *brightening the classroom,*
- *recognition of the social problems*

All in all, drama makes it possible to combine theory and practice by making it possible to practice the language in various real-life like, natural situations. Learners become a part of the play, they assume roles, act out, using the appropriate language. Thus, students are prepared

for the real-life like communication through stimulations of situations and practice of the language used in those situations.

6.2.4. Using Novels

Novels offer unlimited and exceptional forms of pedagogic activities. Novels Novels offer intellectual, emotional, linguistic involvement of the students. Novels provide a wide range of activities from extensive reading to close, detailed text analysis (Tsai, 2012). Reading novels offers pleasure and fulfillment to readers. Moreover, novels encourage students to read more, which helps language learners to feel more comfortable with the language. Through reading novels in English, learners improve themselves in various ways, like making predictions, drawing conclusions, decoding the implied meaning, reading between the lines, deciphering different layers of meaning hidden behind and within the words. It helps the learners to become closer the culture of the target language (Lazar, 1990), which leads to their appreciation of other cultures and beliefs and showing respect to the differences. Novels open the doors for the readers to a world where there are experiences, dilemmas, and problems similar to their own, (Hişmanoğlu, 2005) and through the actions, reactions, struggles, and solutions of the characters they can observe how it is possible to overcome such difficulties in life. Additionally, Reading novels gives a chance to the readers to become familiar with the conversational language, which helps them to become more aware of language use (McKay, 1982). Novels take the readers to remote lands, offering them different experiences and introducing them to a wide range of characters throughout the journey, which enriches the minds, hearts and language skills of the language learners.

7. Conclusion

All in all, this study aimed to provide an overview of the role of literature in language classrooms. It has been observed that although literature plays a significant role in the English as a Foreign Language (EFL) classroom, it was neglected for some decades especially during the mid-twentieth century. Thanks to the recognition of the importance of using authentic material within the frame of Communicative Approach to language teaching, during the last few decades of the last century, literature started to gain its significant status. Since then, there has been well-deserved research related to the role of literature and related topics in teaching English.

The study has introduced views on the role of literature in providing significant benefits in the language classrooms, which can be listed as: the significance of literature in stimulating learners' interests and triggering motivation and engagement with literary texts; cultivating EFL learners' language skills as well as developing their critical thinking skills. In addition, the study has included main approaches to the integration of literature in language classrooms and a brief overview of the criteria of text selection and the use of literature in teaching different language skills have been given.

As a concluding remark, it could be added that future research should cover various methodologies, approaches and innovative designs to analyse the effect of using literature on language development of leaners, which would make a significant contribution to the field of English language education. Besides, introduction of systematic and new ideas related to

classroom applications of literary texts in the EFL context could be a useful guide for teachers with less experience in implementing literature in their language classrooms. In addition, information on the stages of application of the text with students from different age groups and levels will be a useful contribution to the related field.

Briefly to conclude, the implications of the research related to the role of literature in the EFL classroom indicate that it is important for the EFL teachers to integrate as many literary texts as possible into their syllabus so as to encourage the learners to be actively involved in classroom activities and to promote the use of spontaneous use of real-life language. Hence, EFL learners, apart from being exposed to the cultural aspects of literary texts, could benefit from authentic literary materials that are interesting and engaging. Thus, literature, evidently, promotes learners' cultural awareness and tolerance by helping them develop awareness of realities of their society and the world around them. In this way, EFL learners, while practicing the language use in real context, could gain an intellectual perspective, which help them develop as a whole person.

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ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Asst. Prof. Dr. Hayriye AVARA

ORCID ID: 0000-0001-5575-3497

hayriye.avara@amasya.edu.tr / hayriyeavara@gmail.com

Amasya University

Hayriye Avara has been teaching at Amasya University, Faculty of Education, Department of Foreign Language Education since February 2020. Before Amasya University, she taught in Ankara, at Hacettepe University, School of Foreign Languages, from 1998 to 2020. She worked as a Turkish language advisor in Melbourne, Australia at the Victorian School of Languages from 2010 to 2015. She taught Turkish Language and Culture at graduate and undergraduate levels at Ca' Foscari, University of Venice, Department of Culture and Society of Asia and Mediterranean Africa, from 2017 to 2018. She obtained her BA degree from Middle East Technical University, Faculty of Education, Department of Foreign Language Education in 1994. She had her MA degree from Hacettepe University, Faculty of Letters, Department of English Language and Literature in 1998 and her PhD at Ankara University, Faculty of Languages and History-Geography, Department of Western Languages and Literatures-Department English Language and Literature- in 2008. Her research interests include language teaching, literature, culture, ethnic identity, multiculturalism and language teaching policies.