

Literature Teaching and the LMD: Learning by Reading

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Abstract:

We could have literature without writing, and we could even have literature without speech but we could not have literature without language. Language is a complex phenomenon and an area of research for the linguist. Literature teachers have seen little need for research on the teaching of literature, while language teachers have investigated language teaching perspectives. The language found in literary texts is particularly interesting for language learners.

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Paradoxically, the study of literary language has indirectly triggered off a better understanding of language and language use as a whole because it is used in literature, in many ways central to its understanding and use in more general terms. Literature is made of, from and with ordinary language. This is why “literariness” is a matter of degree rather than kind. “Features of language use more normally associated with literary contexts are found in what are conventionally thought of as non-literary contexts. It is for this reason that the term “literariness” is preferred to any term which suggests an absolute division between what is “literary” and what is “non-literary”. It is, in our view, more accurate to speak of degrees of literariness in language use”. (Carter and Nash quoted and discussed in Verdonk, 2002)

1- The Study of Literature

The discipline of literature, like every other organized body of knowledge, requires the use of a critical apparatus, method, a terminology and an endeavour has been made to supply this. Every work of literature stands somewhere in a perspective of history, every writer has exercised his skill in a given historical situation. As a result, much intention has been paid to the background of authors and their works, to the social, intellectual and moral climate which has influenced creative literary activity.

All in all literature is here to give us pleasure for the delight it brings to us. It exists primarily to be read and being read, to be loved and cherished for its unflinching

companionship. No amount of abstract generalization about movements, periods, influences and reactions can wholly explain the coming into existence of a work of art. Yet, it is equally true that every writer belongs to his age; he is born in a society and inherited its terms and its culture, he has to express himself. That culture includes language, the raw material of literature, which shapes our thoughts and is shaped by them. It includes also the structural forms, the rhythms, and the imagery that past writers have established as traditional.

When someone says or writes a thing well or memorably, he is engaged in a literary enterprise. It is true that literature has come to us because men and women of natural refinement and quick sensibility have wished to record their thoughts and experiences. They wrote for the sake of writing; they have found pleasure in communicating their ideas, in expressing emotions and situations, recalling real or imaginary things which came into their lives and shaped their personalities. To synopsis:

“A writer is often more intent on interpreting himself to himself than on revealing himself to others”. (T.G. Williams, 2000: 06)

An example out of very many that may be given in the poetry of Gerald Manley Hopkins, none of his poems was published during his life; he became known to the public after his death.

Writing may thus be an activity of genius, carried on with no idea of a possible future reader sharing the author’s private thoughts feelings and emotions. It may also be a mode of self-retrospection, a discovery of one’s soul and an avenue to self-achievement.

While there are these modest writers and thinkers who look inwards for their satisfactions, there is no gainsaying the fact that for the most part writing, as much as speech, implies a public which is to be entertained, instructed or persuaded. It is a primary function of the writer to make him/her understood. Oscar Wilde says:

“The meaning of any beautiful created thing is a much in the soul of him who looks at it as it was in his soul who wrought it. Nay it is rather the beholder who lends to the beautiful thing its myriad meanings and makes it marvellous for us”. (Oscar Wilde, 2007: 985)

The hearer or the reader has something of his own to contribute, as with every other art there has to be a two-way transaction, converging from the artist and the art lover upon the work of art.

1-1- Literature and Language

The raw material of language consists of words –their meanings, their sounds, their associations and their power of entering into syntactical relationship, whereby thought is made possible. When this raw material is combined and worked into patterns of sound and meaning which provide us with aesthetic enjoyment, we then call it literature. The art of literature consists in using language to communicate from one mind to other experiences which to the originating mind are significant. The significance may be in the experience itself or in the actual happening and its details and the impact it produced on the mind of the person to whom it happened. These two things we usually distinguish as the objective and the subjective, the matter and the manner, or the “What” and the “How”. Williams T.G. (2000) argues that:

“Language can do no more than represent experience symbolically”. (T.G. Williams, 2000: 7)

He exemplified it in the sequence of sound-waves set up by the spoken utterance of a word such as “rain”, or in the pattern of the light-waves set up by the making of black marks on white paper to represent these sounds, there is nothing even remotely remembering either the physical fact of a downpour, or any of the emotional states of mind to which this may give rise. He adds:

“Language may act upon thought and feeling in such a way that the mind is made more perspective by the imaginative experience than it would be by one that was real”. (Ibid: 8).

We can explain it by the fact that language contains within itself certain powers of stimulating the imagination. He explores:

“Since language is supreme among the faculties with which humanity is endowed, not only answering the necessities of mere survival but also serving the delights and consolidations of “divine philosophy” (Ibid: 8).

It may be said that literature is the art of using language to tell about experiences through imagination only and to provide with pleasure by communicating it since it approaches life from various ends and expresses it in many ways.

Above all, literature is supreme among the arts which add grace to human existence; it has become for the most part a matter of silent reading with the eyes, rather than of utterance requiring the use of the organs of speech. Not a hundredth part of what is now written as literature is ever spoken aloud.

Language is a social product, which reflects closely the mental and moral features of the cultural community in which it is used. These features are modified as the generations succeed each other, and the symbols of the language, that is, its words and structural forms, gather associations and become impregnated with the materials of which history is made. Many of the words which Shakespeare's thought have come to us have, since he used them more than three hundred and fifty years ago become loaded with new meanings. They have in them today not only something of the culture of the sixteenth century, but of every succeeding epoch. That is one of the most important obstacles to a full understanding of an early writer. Without a well-developed instrument of language literature, no cultural advance beyond the most rudimentary is possible for any reader. Writing by storing up experience and knowledge, paves the way to the present to build upon the past. To study peoples' language and literature is therefore to study its mind in the making.

Language is a medium of communication, and literature is the totality of what has been considered most worthy of communication. Literature as a subject of story, acts, as do all other forms of story, to perform such all-important functions as telling human beings what is important in life, telling us what is worth attracting our admiration and our contempt, telling us what is like to be those who live in different circumstances and different historical times and in different bodies, telling us what we should pay attention to and what we can afford to ignore, and to conclude, telling us how life might be lived and carried out in one way rather than another.

Reading literature across cultures helps making our world anew. It transforms society into one for it allows real change and carries the major responsibility for transforming the world. Literature study is seen as being the study of culture because literary texts are, indeed, cultural texts and because readers or learners read from diverse cultural stances. Consequently, literary works and readings may be considered as an implicit building for specific cultural meanings for students and teachers are necessarily negotiating social, cultural and literary meanings as they engage in literature and literary study.

Languages and cultures in language learning are not independent of each other. Phillips and Gonzales state in Anthony J. Liddicoat:

"The student of a language other than their own can be given an extraordinary opportunity to enter the languaging of other, to understand the complexity of the experience of others to enrich their own. To enter other

cultures is to re-enter one's own". (Phillips and Gonzales in Anthony J. Liddicoat, 2013: 4)

Thus, learning a language is learning its culture for they are intimately interrelated, and both are an act of learning about the other and about the self because their relationship is indivisible. The experiences of linguistic and cultural diversity shape at the same time the focus of language teaching and learning. They add:

"The intercultural is dynamic engagement with the relationships between language, culture, and learning. It involves recognition of the constructedness of perception and interpretation as a starting point for making, communicating, and interpreting meanings about and across languages and cultures". (Ibid: 16)

They detail it in their quotation:

"Cultural competence is understood as control of an established canon of literature, which can be measured in terms of the breadth of reading and knowledge about the literature". (Ibid: 26)

Among the many different ways that the human being searches for meaning, deploying our resources for reading literature well and teaching it effectively must be among the most important resources we can use in general, not just for disciplinary purposes. Yet, when it comes for educational ones, we prepare our students for their future lives and occupations, for their careers, for parenthood, for civic responsibility and for life in general. Levine notices:

"Teaching literature is a subject, and a difficult one. Doing it well requires scholarship and critical sophistication, but it also requires a clear idea of what literature is, of what is entailed in reading and criticizing it. It requires, in fact, some very self-conscious theorizing. But beyond the questions that ought to feed any serious critic's sense of what doing literature might mean, there are questions about the relation between such sophistication and the necessities of the classroom: what, how and when are students most likely to learn?" (Levine, 2001: 14)

Literary study is not only a form of *therapy* but also a form of learning as the case may be when we read novels or poems. We face the grieves and losses of life and all what literature offers the students like a wide range of attitudes, concepts, insights, subtleties, ethical deliberations and both practical and intellectual remedies that they may adopt or store up for future consideration and possible use in life.

Literature makes us travel and it transports us across generations, races, ethnicities, genders, classes and cultures. It stands as both aesthetic strategies and human learning, textually slippery, textually determinate, and master-scripted and a critique of master scripts. But above all, it is learning. Literature undoubtedly encompasses not only the most comprehensive survey of the massive range of human types and situations to be found on the other side of the looking glass, but it also embodies this survey in concrete representations that actually invite the readers to assume, through the vicarious imagination, modes of living, feeling and judging that they may otherwise never learn about at all. It is an achievement if students learning literature learn much more than discovering that a given sonnet for example has fourteen lines with a particular rhyme scheme and metre, but much more than this. That these formal features of the sonnet are vehicles for a set of invitations –to feel in new ways, to see in new ways, to think in new ways and to judge in new ways.

Learning literature and studying in an LMD context, does not mean that it has to do with existential issues but rather to suggest that technical content in literature are valuable. The specific Aesthetic and rhetorical strategies constitute a work's material structure: the imagery, the diction, the tone, the descriptions, the characterisations, the narrative techniques, the sound values and rhythms of language and so on. Literary study inherited from philosophy some very highly developed techniques for concentrating on all the possible meanings and significance of individual words.

As a discipline, Philology provided the model of a methodology for interpreting individual words at three important levels: their semantic territory, their etymological history, and the semantic layers made up by their etymological history. Philology also taught literary study how to fit a word, with all its unpacked baggage, back into the context of the passage from which it derived. A literary author writes or speaks words; so do a historical, legal, philosophical, scientific and every other kind of author. There may always be questions about what the words they uttered were what they meant, what force they had, and what they entailed or implied. The task of the interpreter, whether literary critic, philosopher, scientist, lawyer or just everyday interlocutor, is to answer then that is a task we all perform all the time. In the case of literature, the task is sometimes, though by no means always, harder to perform than it is in other domains. It is upheld that:

“The study of literature and language could be an opportunity to understand and encourage an even more open and multicultural society”. (Eaglestone, 2000: 110)

Literature has the power to hold an essential place in language teaching, to the mutual inter-illumination of literature, language and cultural understandings. Todorov (1990: 12) maintains: *“Poetics will give way to the theory of discourse, and the analysis of its genres”*. Language and literature have much to say to each other. The very common question to be asked is: Does literature have a language of its own? The simple question to this old-fashioned question is “no”. The fact is that the language to be found in literary texts is particularly interesting for language learners. The study of literary language enables us for a better understanding of language and language use as a whole.

Language used in literature is in many ways central to understanding language and language use in more general terms. Literature is made of, from and with ordinary language, which is itself already surprisingly literary. The language of literature is noticeably different in that it is typically more interesting and varied and more representative than the language found in most classrooms today. Williams concludes that: *“A definition of language is always, implicitly, a definition of human beings in the world”*. (Williams, 1977: 23)

Traditional views of the language of literature in the Anglo-American context derive from Romanticism and New Criticism. They typically characterise literature as “the best that is known and thought in the world”, in Arnold’s well-known formula, and therefore an appropriate model for students to revere, if not aspire to. Such a rationale lies behind the traditional modern foreign languages curriculum which culminates in the study of literature, with the implication that the literary classics represent in some sense the best uses of the language to date.

“In major literary works we have the fullest use of language”. *“Literature is the supreme creative act of language”*. (F.R. Leavis, Cambridge Professor of English a key founder of literary studies in the UK quoted in the context of useful discussion of formalist approaches by Birch 1989: 44-51).

“Poetry, for such critics, is found in writings like those of the Victorians Hopkins. But is all literary language really this difficult? How typical is such poetry?” The formalists look a functional view, asking what was literature “for”? The answer given by Shklovsky and his colleagues was that the purpose of literature was to “defamiliarise” our everyday world, to make a reader perceive afresh the phenomenal and social world around.

Cook (1994) offers a more modern version of the idea, based on research in cognitive psychology. Literary text worked, it was proposed, by making a reader halt and ponder over the unusual language it used, which “deviates” from that found in more everyday contexts, which the formalists called “practical language”. Literature in this view consists of special uses of language. The idea that what distinguished literary language was that it was carefully pondered and constructed by the literary writer, and consequently, often by the reader too, remains influential, and be shown to be the case in many instances. “People who live by the sea no longer hear the waves”. Shklovsky observes in “Art as Technique” (1917), often taken as a manifesto for formalism and widely reprinted (e.g. in Rice and Waugh, 2001). Art should “*de-automatise*” or “*de-habitualise*”, especially in the modern world.

Shklovsky (quoted in Lemon and Keis) states:

“Art exists that one way recover the sensation of life, it exists to make one feel things, to make the stony. The purpose of art is to impart the sensation of things as they are perceived and not as they are known. The technique of art is to make objects “unfamiliar” to make forms difficult, to increase the difficulty and length of perception because the process of perception is an end in itself and must be prolonged. Art is a way of experiencing the art fullness of an object; the object is not important”. (Shklovsky quoted in Lemon and Keis, 1965: 12)

Language learners want and need to focus on form, but not to take on difficulty for its own sake. Fortunately, not all or even most literature is textually or linguistically difficult. The language of literature is not fundamentally different from more ordinary language, but very much related to it. Bakhtin advocates that:

“Language is not a neutral medium that passes freely and easily into the private property of the speaker’s intentions, it is populated –over-populated with the intentions of others. Expropriating it, forcing it to submit to one’s own intentions and accounts, is a difficult and complicated process”. (Bakhtin, 1981: 294)

Literary texts make use of a wide range of styles, varieties and registers that could be of interest to a student of language. If the language of literature is in any way distinct, as has been argued, it is distinct for such a toleration of a greater variety than is found in any other kind of language use.

Literature may be different because of a greater reflexivity and self-consciousness concerning the forms of language it uses. Language and literature, then, are essentially inherently creative and figurative, and users derive creative pleasure and negotiate social

relations through conscious engagement with language and language use. Literary language is often ordinary and sometimes-ordinary language is surprisingly poetic. If language found in literary text is difficult, it is because of its sheer range. Literature is a kind of super-genre which can demand more of its readers than more predictable genre like the business letter or a medical report.

But the majority of people tend to think that books of literature are books over which we fall asleep, other think that literature books are the ones we buy but we do not read. Mark Twain (1904) says about classic literature books that they are something which everybody wants to have read but not to read.

The teaching of modern foreign languages and literatures was typically modelled in the first instance on the teaching of the classics (i.e., Greek and Latin classics). From the 1980's and mainly in Europe, a wind of change blew over the educational systems. The role of literature in second language teaching programmes and its development paved the way to the communicative language teaching approach replacing the Grammar-Translation Method of language teaching, whose aim was to enable the student to read successfully the classic literature of the language, because language can never cease to be at the centre of literary or any other reading, especially if language is understood as discourse (what it does for its users) rather than simply being utterances, words and sentences, Kramsch and Kramsch (2000: 554) observe that: "*The study of language in those days meant the study of literature*". Reflecting the growing prestige of psychology, literature was also justified as a way to know what others were thinking, indeed how they thought.

Alan Maley (1993), for example who represented a significant if not the central "first-wave" developer and promoter of classroom pedagogies and materials for literature in communicative language teaching (Maley and Duff 1989; Duff and Maley 1990; Maley 1993), taking the humanistic line, advocates the use of literature because it is intrinsically motivating to talk about death, life, love and the like, larger themes.

Language teachers have often justified the use of literature as the best way to teach a language, a kind of linguistic and ethical model as offering privileged access to the culture of a specific speech community. Literature is said to promote intercultural understanding and mutual respect. Lantolf assumes that:

“Learning a second language is not about simply learning new linguistic forms, but it is about learning how to construct, exchange, and interpret signs that have been created by someone else”. (Lantolf, 2000: 22)

1-2- Reading Literature

What are the dominant theories and models for the reading of literature that one may see in perspective for the present research on Literature and LMD what are the gaps or problems that face the second or foreign language readers of literature? How does reading literature differ from other types of readings? What makes the difference between readers? Are they good or poor readers of literature? And what should be known about reading literature in a second language?

For some, literature is best studied as language in action rather than static. For others, it is central and very important to education because literature and culture are inseparable and must be studied together. For many practitioners and researchers in language and literature, it is thought that literature is best understood, as a kind of reading for it is difficult to think of literature without considering reading according to them. The reader is central to meaning construction because readers read differently, their identities, conditions; previous experience and future hopes contribute importantly to processes of active meaning construction for they are social beings as well as individuals. Different readers, even the same readers on different occasions, will respond differently to the same text, noticing and valuing or devaluing different features and *“Those who can read texts do not all read them in the same fashion”* (Chartier quoted in Bennett, 1995: 135).

A question is often asked as to whether there is a difference between reading literary texts and non-literary ones. Barry (1987: 9) suggested that this issue divided American critics *“literary text requires mandarin exegesis”* from British *“common culture”* ideas: *“Anyone who can read can read a literary text”*. Literary reading both is and is not different and the difference remains in what wider understandings of reading processes could predict of an interaction with language with certain tendencies read in certain contexts by certain people for certain purposes.

Literature as a discipline often prefers the difficult, where readers, predictably, will initially at least prefer less difficult texts in a testing situation. Readers of literature face some difficulties: among these one can mention the relative lack of experience of life, lack of literature reading experience, basic reading comprehension skills. They tend to read what

they expect to read and respond as they feel they ought to respond. Some readers give up on texts they cannot understand or produce wild interpretations, and they follow received opinions of value, others analyse literary meaning too closely which alter and change the original meaning of verses, imagery, figurative speech...

We, as teachers, can help students make good use of the time they spend reading by facilitating and providing the time and a forum for students to discuss among themselves, to show them how they approach their reading of different text genres, how much time they devote to reading, when and where they do it.

Rosen Blatt (1938) points out that:

“The special meaning and more particularly, the submerged associations that these words and images have for the individual reader will largely determine what the work communicates to him. The reader brings to the work personality traits, memories of past events, present needs and preoccupations, a particular mood of the moment, a particular physical condition. These and many other elements in a never-to-be-duplicated combination determine his response to the peculiar contribution of the text”. (Rosen Blatt, 1938: 30)

The literary reading should be personal, pleasurable. Readers need time and space and much encouragement to develop confidence in their own responses for literature plays a major role in wider moral education *“Books are a means of getting outside the particularly limited cultural group into which the individual is born”* (Marshall, 2000: 386).

Culler (1975) suggests that we do learn to read differently when we read literature; he proposed intuitively that experiences readers of literature activate certain convention of literary reading when they approach the literary text:

- The rule of significance: we expect a work of literature to the degree that it is “classic”, to express a significant attitude to some large universal problem concerning “man” and/or his relation to the universe etc... (humanism)
- The precise words have been carefully selected: importance of surface forms.
- The rule of metaphorical coherence: we expect to find significant and meaningful patterning of imagery and other non-literal language.
- The literary work should be readily inscribable in a literary tradition.
- Thematic unity can be traced.
- Convention of binary opposites, semantic or thematic axes also promoting coherence (good and evil, man and woman, east and west, etc).

- The fiction convention (suspension of disbelief), a thought experiment, imagination. (Culler, 1975: 116)

Different readers perceive different inter-texts based on differing experiences. Readers with more literary educations tend to assign more importance to sensitivity to literary intertextuality as a component of literary competence. Readers of literary texts expect to find, and even use as a criterion for literariness, a release from demands of practicality realism, etc and the possibility of deriving multiple, even mutually contradictory meanings from literary texts. Literary texts are expected to be typically difficult or demanding, and meanings not obvious or easy to extract because readers will be looking for ambiguities and pleasurable unreality.

Literary reading is generally seen by researchers as an interaction between the reader and the text. Fish supports that:

“Meanings are the property neither of fixed and stable texts nor of free and independent readers but of interpretive communities that are responsible both for the shape of the reader’s activities and for the texts those activities produce”. (Fish, 1980: 322)

Language is not only required for expressing our thoughts but it is at the same time part of our thinking process for it is related to reality and related to it in order to convey meaning because when we isolate our language from our reality, we significantly leave out considerable information. Geoff Hall proves that:

“The reader is paramount, but context rather than intrinsic textual or linguistic features produces meaning. No reader, no poem in short”. (Geoff Hall, 2005: 108)

When we read, we not only involve our thought but language as well because a reader brings a lot to a text when reading it as much as he/she brings to oneself. Researchers have been asking many questions, which reader? Reading what and for what purpose and where and when? When comes to reading literature, genre makes a difference because what is thought to be “literature” is read differently from non-literature; poems are read differently from stories. Students in the LMD Algerian context have a tendency of preferring poems from literary texts because as native speakers they tend to choose poems for their rhetoric which remind them of Arab poetry.

Readers of literature tend to look carefully at certain surface linguistic forms but they do this in order to help them infer what lies behind the obvious literal meanings of the text for literary texts are expected to be complex in them and/or in the demands, they will make on readers. This behaviour and these expectations are learnt if they are not taught. Cognition is important in literary reading. As a result personal feelings and response are affected. Readers of literature focus on precise surface linguistic forms especially if they are stylistically foregrounded. Reading of literature tends to be slower because more careful and more thoughtful is more pleasurable. Successful literary reading often requires more extensive and elaborate inferencing activity and development of personal experience and background knowledge because the readers of literature expect a point, a meaning beyond the obvious story or situation related, and will actively, even imaginatively try to construct such meaning and cohesion for significance matters more than facts or truth.

Literary texts often contain surprises, unexpected language, events, developments, which require rapid and possibly extended revision of a reader's situation model. Yet, literary readers are more tolerant of these than readers of more informational texts would be, and they will try very hard to accommodate them to their developing understanding of the text. They look for personal relevance and interest in texts purporting to be literary, because emotions and feelings are more likely to enter into literature reading experiences for experienced readers of literature and those with literary educations read differently from less experienced, or those without formal literary education. Experience is an important factor because even the same readers can read the same text differently on different occasions. Comprehension, then, is now widely understood as the relating of new information to information that has been already stored in the reader's memory. More recently, Kramtsch (1998) has argued that the process of literary reading is essentially the same as any other form of reading, though he notes too that the actual words of a literary text seem more important, and that successful literary reading (e.g., of a novel) requires the construction and maintenance in the reader's mind of "complex, multi-levelled situation model" (who has done what to who, where and so on). He also notes that expert readers seem to differ from less experienced one. Halasz (1991) shows that the reading of a literary text tended to prompt more associations, especially personal situations, but also noted that literary readers tend to be reminded of other literary texts, they have read too.

All in all, literary reading involves more concern to activate different possibilities and levels of meaning, where readers of science and social science were more concerned to

establish information, with readings becoming increasingly specific and precise. Literary reading may be more demanding of working memory than other kinds of reading. In reading literature, world knowledge and reference is less important than significance because readers of literature are less likely to notice inconsistencies, and processed texts which would seem unlikely or illogical in an ordinary everyday perspective more quickly if they were understood to be literary texts. Schmidt illustrates that:

“Readers are prepared to go beyond the barriers of their world knowledge in order to arrive at a coherent interpretation of the text”. (Schmidt, 1982: 12)

Expert readers in literature are likely to enjoy the experience more, though this enjoyment needs further investigation. Many ordinary readers report largely negative memories of being forced to read literature or they have been asked to in school. For more cognitive perspectives, it has been noted that some readers at least report pleasure in reading poetry, stories or other literature, that indeed they perceive the main function of literature to be the pleasures it offers. A good reading will sometimes return to repeated readings of the same text for pleasure. Reading literature for pleasure is also well-known for example in the growing popularity of reading groups which meet in private homes/ clubs in leisure time on a regular basis. We notice that such groups have been through some form of higher education, where they learnt to enjoy reading literature or maybe they caught the virus of the reading habit.

Good readers of literature can comprehend verbal ambiguities, regularise complex syntax, and discriminate among verbal rhythms. They constantly predict how a story will unfold, and expect to help the author make the story. They evaluate an author’s point of view and fuse emotional and intellectual responses because they feel like being able to write and often do, enjoying the power of creating texts to be read.

Language, however, is the obvious and critical difference between reading in your first language and reading in a foreign language, and this is where the psycholinguists have quite reasonably focused. What matters is that you have started somewhere whether in your native language or the second one. Bern Hardt sums it all by stating that:

“Indeed different languages and scripts may require variations in emphasis on components of any reading model”. (Bern Hardt, 1991: 67)

The automaticity is not obvious because reading in a second language is typically more effortful, even for relatively advanced reading who may be very fluent and practised

readers for they need to read measurably more slowly in their second language. Anderson explains that:

“The evidence is that, in second-language reading, knowledge of the second language is a more important factor than first-language reading abilities... Poor second-language reading performance is likely to be due to insufficient language knowledge...” (Anderson, 2000: 23-25)

First, language permits every human being on earth to produce an unlimited number of utterances, new, in an infinite number and various contexts so that to fit every developing communicative needs. Old expressions are modified, new ones acquired or invented. Humans are not alike, they have an innate general capacity for language acquisition but also a creative one for they have the opportunity to learn from their environment and communicate in a boundless variety of ways. Second language is acquired as much on the structure as on its semantic meaning so as to convey the target meaning. B. Geoffrey, C. Brumfit, R. Flavell, P. Hill & A. Pincas take the same stand:

“Second language is not a sequence of signals, where each stands for a particular meaning. If words were merely fixed signals of meaning, then each time a word occurred it would signal the same thing, irrespective of the structure of the whole utterances –in fact there would be no “whole utterances” beyond individual words” (B. Geoffrey, C. Brumfit, R. Flavell, P. Hill & A. Pincas, 1978: 26)

Poor readers have a tendency to use or rely on words-level cues and are defeated by difficult words because some of the features that cause problems for first language of literature will often be even more acute for second language readers like lack of vocabulary on a linguistic level, or unfamiliarity with appropriate cultural knowledge and make comprehension and interpretation difficult; which is the case of our LMD students of literature classes.

Schubz (1981) from the USA, considers the relative lack of “*readability*” of literary texts in linguistic terms, referring to factors such as complexity and difficulty of words, sentences and syntax- to which we could add sometimes demanding organization at the level of genre, discourses and rhetoric. In the light of this, Schubz points at a tendency in many higher education teaching situations to jump straight from the linguistic syllabus to the literary (themes, imagery, ideas), an often premature assumption that “*their language is up to it now*”, when in fact language issues should be more directly addressed in literature reading, certainly in earlier stages if not always.

Reading literature becomes an interaction between the reader and text for it opens his/her horizons and expands him/her; it satisfies his/her curiosity, pleasure and it increases their (his/her) expectations and interests. Reading has often been advocated as an invaluable source of rich and extended natural or authentic input from which learners can benefit even as they take pleasure in it because reading literature promotes language acquisition, mainly the acquisition of vocabulary and a greater automaticity of the language. Readers of another culture and language's literature may have difficulties both linguistically and culturally, because it is surely right to suggest that appreciation of others viewpoints are to learn that literature which may be able to support or facilitate such learning. Literature reading is not to change someone's viewpoint but rather to broaden the horizons of all, to the benefit of all.

Culture can be an interesting avenues for the foreign language reader because when we read other cultural and linguistics' literature concepts; we understand more the viewpoint, the world of the Others and open our eyes to further horizons. Geoff Hall (2005) argues in this vein:

“Studies that have been done suggest that intercultural understanding is at best hard work, and can at worst confirm or even exacerbate pre-existing prejudices. Literature is not magic bullet. As the reader response approach has emphasised, different readers read differently”. (Geoff Hall, 2005: 133)

It seems impossible to dissociate literature from culture for they are interrelated in multiple ways. When culture is regarded from the discursive point of view, it offers a better understanding and investigation of language learning for it is more and more understood and assimilated in dynamic terms, constructed interactivity between people. Literature when taught offers an opportunity and a prestigious access to various cultures and languages. Nowadays, literary studies are seen as some variety of cultural studies. Literature and culture go hand in hand with language learning and as a form of cultural and linguistic negotiation.

Reading for curiosity, pleasure and to expand horizons has often been advocated as an invaluable source of richness and extended natural or authentic input. From which learns can benefit while they are taking pleasure in it and promoting the language acquisition in the same time in particular the acquisition of vocabulary.

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