Justifying the Use of Literature in ELT: Rationale and Illustration with Extracts from Literary Texts and Associated Activities

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□ ABSTRACT □

The reasons for incorporating literature in EFL classrooms range from improving language proficiency and gaining cultural experience to increasing literary knowledge. This paper is an endeavor to explore the feasibility of the effective use of literature for English classes. The study comprises two chapters. Chapter one, the rationale, includes possible definitions of literature as well as giving reasons for using literature in the language classroom. It also refers to some problems encountered by EFL learners in the Syrian universities and the advantages of using literature to deal with these problems.

Chapter two, provides activities considering the role of literature in transferring the culture of the target language as well as other skills. In this regard, culture is treated as an essential fifth skill in addition to the teaching of speaking, listening, reading, and writing.

The main discussion in this paper is that literature can be used to foster English classes in the Syrian universities. In support of this argument, the second chapter integrates reasons in favor of using literature as a motivating material in the language classroom, and it tries to support this argument by incorporating activities designed to enhance the teaching of the language skills.

Key Words: literature, culture, motivation, effective, language skills.

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مبررات استخدام الأدب في تعليم اللغة الانكليزية:
ايضاحات بمقاطع من نصوص أدبية وتمارين مرتبطة

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□ ملخّص □

تتنوع أسباب ادماج الأدب في دروس تعليم اللغة الانكليزية كلغة أجنبية من الاتقان المتزايد للغة واكتساب التجارب الثقافية الى المعرفة الادبية المتنامية. هذا البحث هو محاولة لاستكشاف امكانية (قابلية) الاستخدام الفعال للأدب في دروس اللغة. تتألف الدراسة من قسمين. يتضمن الجزء الاول، وهو (Rationale)، تعاريف ممكنة للأدب وتقديم أسباب استخدامه في الدروس اللغوية. يشير ايضا الى بعض المشاكل التي يعانيها طلاب اللغة الانكليزية كلغة اجنبية في السياق السوري وقد تم هنا رسم الخطوط المهمة للتعامل مع هذه المشاكل.

يقدم الجزء الثاني أنشطةً لإبراز دور الأدب في نقل ثقافة اللغة الهدف وفي مهارات أخرى. وفي هذا المضمون، تم التعامل مع الثقافة كمهارة ضرورية خامسة في تدريس التحدّث والاستماع و القراءة والكتابة.

وبما يؤيد المناقشة الرئيسية في هذه الدراسة، تبين النتائج أن من الممكن توظيف الأدب في تعزيز دروس اللغة الانكليزية في السياق السوري.

وهكذا فان الدراسة تقدم أسبابا تؤيد استخدام الأدب كمادة محفزة في دروس اللغة كما أنها تحاول دعم هذه الفرضية باستحضار تمارين مصممة لتعزيز تدريس مهارات اللغة.

الكلمات المفتاحية: الأدب، الثقافة، التحفيز ، فعال، مهارات اللغة.

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Introduction: What is Literature?

When approaching the issue of the role of literature in ELT, the following question is inevitable: what is literature? The term literature is not defined in any exclusive sense. This question has an important implication for the use of literature in the classroom. The answer to this question is debatable, since there are not any rules that clearly define what is literary and what is not. In the practice of language teaching, two definitions can be discerned. The first, Literature with capital L, refers to texts which might be termed *canonical* such as novels, plays and poems (Parkinson, 2000:56). In other words they are texts that are likely to be defined as literary by the literary academy for purposes of school and university study of literature. The second definition, as Parkinson (2000:5) refers, 'literature' with small 'l', recognizes the 'literariness' of a wide range of texts. These texts can be categorized in three types: a) written and spoken texts as novels, plays, newspapers, academic writing, radio, interviews, TV and film commentaries etc. b) visual texts as films, television, advertisement etc. c) heard texts such as vocal or instrumental musical texts, records, CDs etc. All the three types are achievements of a society. They reflect its values and social behaviours. Therefore, literary texts can be considered 'cultural documents' offering to their reader, listener, and spectator a cultural awareness of the target country/language in which these texts are produced. (Ibid.)

Context and motivation of the study

There is still comparatively little clarity about what role literature/literary texts should perform in EFL , and it is not uncommon to find a situation where the teacher translates passages and dictates notes, in an examination-centred approach that largely ignores the deeper insights or skills that students might gain from their confrontation with literature.

When referring to EFL at the Syrian universities, the teaching for most university students is carried out in the form of a one-way monologue. In many cases, teaching EFL suffers from a decrease in interactions whether teacher-student or student-student interactions. Another main issue is related to a lack of motivation—the primary factor in language learning. In many cases, EFL at the faculties is taught through reading aloud and translating or explaining difficult words. Students do almost nothing except listening to the teacher's monologue and later learn the 'notes' from the 'help books', popularly known as guides, to pass examination.

Statement of problem (main problems)

The analysis of the problems is based on my own experience as a teacher of English at a Syrian university. Talking about teaching English at the Syrian universities, there are some problems in ELT in terms of texts, skills, methodology and exam tests.

First, the content of texts seems not to reflect students' needs and interests and some texts are not relevant. In this respect, texts chosen for language teaching may not reflect the students' goals and abilities. Here literature is introduced as one of the most useful sources of materials for ELT. Nunan (1995:227) argues that 'materials are an important component within the curriculum and are often the most tangible and visible component of pedagogy'.

Second, the language skills focus on are reading and translation or vocabulary. The oral skills, listening and speaking, do not enjoy the same privilege as reading, translation and vocabulary. In addition, the skills focused on are taught as separate skills. According to modern language teaching methodologies, learning a language is best fulfilled through the integration of all language skills, and to separate them or to neglect any of them results in

a lack of acquiring the communicative and sociolinguistic functions of language. Introducing literature serves this end as we will see later in the discussion of this paper.

Third, the teaching method is teacher-centred not student-centred and it is not highly motivating. It should be motivating and interesting through incorporating activities or tasks that involve the learner in terms of interaction and interest. Literature, as clarified later in this paper, provides lively and interesting materials that may be appealing to language learners.

Last but not least, there should be an innovation through communicative language teaching methodology and reader-response approach. In this regard, the paper will show that introducing literature into the material taught to our students will enhance communication along with the other language skills.

Objectives of the study

This study is a discussion of the possibility of using literature in EFL and how literature can be effectively employed to overcome some problems that hinder the process of teaching English at the Syrian universities. Such problems can be identified as follows: the lack of motivation since texts or materials are not chosen according to students' needs and interests, the focus on specific language skills and neglect of others, the teaching method which is teacher-centred.

The present study therefore tries to shed light on the following questions:

Is the use of literature with our learners justifiable?

Can literature be an effective tool and a source of materials that teachers and learners can benefit from in terms of improving interaction and other language skills?

Can the use of literary texts be employed as a motivating instrument?

What opportunities does the use of supplementary literary materials create in the language classroom?

Methodology

The basic concept adopted in this paper is a discussion in favour of using literature as an effective tool for language teaching. For this purpose, the first section tries to give relevant or possible definitions of literature and then it provides a rationale for using literature in ELT. In this section The main reasons for including literature in the language learning/teaching process have been outlined. The second section, and in support of the first section, incorporates designed activities from literary books, which serve both for language acquisition and cultural enrichment.

Section One: Rationale for using literature in ELT

It is said that the study of literature 'begins with delight and ends in wisdom' (Hill, 1986: 7), and the study of literature is 'fundamentally a study of language in operation' (Widdoson,1975: 42). This later claim is based on the realization that literature is an example of language in use, and is a context for language use. The following parts presents the rationale for using and introducing literature as materials in ELT.

1. Literature as representational materials in ELT

In his book, *Literature with Small 'l'*, McRae (1991: Preface) argues that the use of 'purely referential materials in language teaching limits the learner's imaginative involvement' with the target language and leads to a 'one-dimensional learning achievement'. In other

words, referential language is language which communicates on only one level, usually in terms of information being sought or given, or of a social situation being handled. Contrary to this, as he suggests, representational materials make an appeal to the learner's imagination: they can be 'any kind of material with imaginative or fictional content that goes beyond the purely referential, and brings imaginative interaction, reaction and response into play'. (McRae,1991:45)

Therefore, referential language does not involve the interlocutors' imaginative faculties. The main function is to inform in socially conditioned situations. It is almost exclusively limited to everyday real-life situational use. Representational language *involves* rather than *informs*. It involves imagination and emotion. It 'opens up, calls upon, stimulates and uses areas of the mind'. (Ibid.)

It is true that language teaching involves communication with a wide range of functions; grammar, vocabulary acquisition, skills development, and similar forms of interactional awareness, but language is used for much more than conveying information which is to be received and understood by 'mechanical' and 'measurable' ways in language learning. In representational materials, the learning process goes beyond the actual didactic moment and comprehension is a stimulus rather than an end in itself. Thus representational language allows participation in class and involves student/student, student/teacher interaction, and student/text interaction. The latter can become extended participation outside classroom. Meaning-focused activity in the language classroom becomes, potentially, the starting-point for 'reflection and cross-reference, as the learner's memory stores the cultural, ideational and linguistic throughput for further consideration, application and recycling'. (Ibid.)

2. Motivation

Literature enjoys mixed fortunes in ELT, owing to the different developments within the discipline of literary studies, and also developments within the ELT profession. Because in many countries around the world literature is highly valued, students of English may experience a 'real sense of achievement when tackling literary materials' in the classroom (Lazar, 1993: 15). Students can make comparisons between literature in English and literature in their own language if they are familiar with literature in their own language. By so doing, literature can provide an interesting and thought-provoking source for learning language. To exploit the students' literary knowledge in their culture, the teacher, for example, can ask them to retell short stories, about similar themes, from the first language before reading or listening to authentic story in English. This can be a starting point to motivate students when deciding to use a story from English literature in the classroom. Again, Ghosn (2002) suggests that children's fiction, with its primarily narrative form, responds to the 'universal human need' for narrative. Therefore, stories are central to a first language program and equally justified in an EFL/ESL program.

Literature exposes students to complex and universal themes. Students everywhere can identify with fear, courage, love, belonging, and the need to achieve. Universal themes are 'generative', allowing for a variety of 'spin-off activities' (Ibid). Using a good novel or short story can be a powerful technique in that it involves the students in the suspense of unravelling the plot. This involvement may be more 'absorbing' for students than the 'pseudo-narratives' that are found in language course books. Lazar argues that:

> A play may engage students in complicated adult dilemmas. A poem may elicit
> a powerful emotional response from students. If the materials are carefully

chosen, students will feel that what they do in the classroom is relevant and meaningful to their own lives. (Lazar, 1993:15)

Another way of motivating students is the use of proverbs. Teachers and students enjoy using proverbs, since they can often be related to similar sayings in students' own languages and discussed, therefore, with some degree of familiarity of known territory. However, overly idiomatic expressions should be avoided especially at primary stages of learning. The following proverbs serve as useful examples:

A bird in the hand is worth two in the bush.
Necessity is the mother of invention.
Birds of feather flock together.

Such sayings offer variants, misreadings and twists which allow for a range of reaction and response, especially in the context of L1/L2 contrast. Students can be asked to give further examples, which may or may not have equivalents in English.

3. Language learning/ acquisition and enrichment

One of the important justifications for using literature in ELT is its value in promoting language development. Literature can be an instrument for the teaching of specific vocabulary or structures for language manipulation. Literature provides a 'rich context in which individual lexical or syntactical items are made more memorable' (Collie and Slater, 1987:4). Carter and Long argue that the main reason for using literature is to demonstrate what 'often was thought but never so well expressed'(Carter and Long, 1999: 2). Literature exposes students to the varied creative uses of the language. The language of literary works is, on the whole, not typical of the language of daily life, nor is it like the language used in textbooks. It is authentic production which may give learners the vocabulary they really need.   Reading a substantial and contextualized literary text is a means to develop learners' reading and writing skills because they gain familiarity with the functions of written language. For example, they become familiar with the formation and function of sentences, the variety of structures and comparing/ contrasting them with the structures of their own language, and the different ways of connecting ideas of a whole text. On the other hand, the extensive reading of long novels or plays develops the basic skills of language learning such as making inferences from linguistic clues and deducing meaning from context. These two skills are useful tools for reading different sorts of materials other than literature.

The use of literary texts in the classroom can be a successful way of promoting activities where students need to share their feelings and opinions, such as discussions and groupwork. Such activities that require the students to express their responses to the multiple levels of meanings inherent in literature can serve to accelerate the students' acquisition of language. This acquisition is enhanced because sometimes the overall context for processing the new language is so 'striking'. Lazar (1993) argues that students may find themselves unfamiliar with some of the vocabulary when reading an extract from a play on their own, but by listening to the extract read by the teacher or acted out on a cassette, they may be able to guess the meaning of unfamiliar word. This guess is facilitated by an understanding of the relationship between the speaker and the intonation used to express the meaning. Another example, which can be more suitable for children, is to read a poem aloud using gestures or mime. This can help them to internalize vocabulary, grammar patterns or even intonation by providing access to a rich variety of language items and a context for their communication efforts. Literature, therefore, seems to offer a

'medium that can create an acquisition-rich environment in the classroom context' (Ghosn, 2002: 175).

In developing the students' ability to talk in the target language, it may be appropriate to refer to effects of stories. The excitement created by a good story is likely to generate much more 'pupil talk' than the often 'artificial' language texts. It is a sort of enthusiastic talk which creates opportunities for receiving feedback and negotiating meaning, both of which are associated with L2 learning.

4. Educating the whole person [personal growth]

In addition to the linguistic benefits of using literature in the language classroom, literature may also have a wider educational function in that it can help to stimulate the imagination of the students, to develop their critical and emotional awareness. Literature offers a natural medium through which students can be introduced to the type of thinking and reasoning expected in other study areas.

Literature can help students to achieve an engagement with the reading of literary texts. Such an engagement cannot really be measured in terms of passing examinations in literature, but it is the extent to which students carry with them beyond the classroom an enjoyment and love for literature which is 'renewed as they continue to engage with literature throughout their lives' (Carter and Long, 1999: 3). If we ask students to respond personally to the text we give them, this will gradually increase their ability and confidence to express their emotions and ideas in English. Moreover, they will feel 'empowered' by their own ability to cope with the literary text and its language, and to relate it to the values and traditions of their own society. By so doing we are imparting a lasting pleasure in reading and a deep satisfaction in a continuing growth of understanding. Selecting literary texts to which students can respond and in which they can participate effectively results in encouraging personal growth of the learner. It is a promotion of the kind of conditions for learning in the classroom which will make the reading of literature a 'memorable', individual and collective experience.

5. Cultural enrichment

In ELT, literary texts are selected because they illustrate aspects of the target culture. Pulverness (1996:11) argues that text selection should focus on the kinds of cultural information literary texts can dramatise:

    period culture -- 'the whole way of life'

    social attitudes -- *le vice anglais* [i.e. the class system]

    political values -- the state of the nation

    language and manners -- soundbites

Therefore, the practical educational utility of literary texts is that they illustrate aspects of an entire society, from the rich to the poor, and show, for example, the lived relationships between the classes. The vividness of literature lies in the construction of 'dramatic voices' which, though they are fictional, represent the people who inhabit a given culture at a particular time (Corbett, 2003: 74).

In many cases, it is not possible for language learners to visit the country where the target language is spoken. As an alternative, understanding of life of the target country must be adopted through indirect routes to this form of understanding: radio programmes, films, newspapers, and literary texts. Novels, short stories or plays offer a context in which characters from different social backgrounds can be depicted. A reader can identify quite strongly with a central character, can discover thoughts, feelings, customs, possessions of

the characters; what they fear, believe in, enjoy; how they speak and behave in certain situations. In positioning themselves in relation to the stance of the character in a novel or a play, the learners might become engaged in the process of exploring and questioning their own worldviews in relation to those presented in the novel or play. Thus learning about a culture is learning about its values and beliefs, and how these are expressed. Here the advantage of literary texts is that they dramatise the target value system by showing its tensions and conflicts, and this, in turn, may motivate learners who are negotiating their own tensions and conflicts as they encounter the new culture.

Creating such an imagined world may develop the learner's understanding of the target culture and give him/her 'a feel for the codes and preoccupations that structure a real society'(Collie and Slater, 1987: 5). For example, reading the literature of a historical period like the Renaissance or the Victorian periods can help the foreign language learner imagine what life was like in other foreign territories, England for example. Choosing a Renaissance play by Shakespeare, *Macbeth* or *King Richard II,* for example, is perhaps best seen as a complement to other materials used to increase the foreign learner's insight into the country whose language is being learnt.

Literature is a viable component of second language programmes at the appropriate level and one of the major functions of literature is to serve as a medium to transfer culture of the people who speak the language in which it is written. It is possible here to agree with Kramsch that:

> Culture in language learning is not an expendable fifth skill tacked on, so to speak, to the teaching of listening speaking reading and writing. It is always in the background, right from day one /…/ challenging [the good language learners'] ability to make sense of the world around them. (Kramsch,1993: 1)

6. Literature as a change agent

Earlier in this paper, it was mentioned that literature can be a medium to illustrate aspects of the target culture. Ghosn (2002: 43) suggests that good literature has the potential power to 'transform, to change attitudes', and to help 'eradicate prejudices while fostering empathy, tolerance, and an awareness of global problems'. It can promote a gradual development of the understanding of self and the world. In multicultural classrooms, the fact is that EFL learners could become bridge- builders across cultures. Reading a story or a play can give the learner insights about characters. This can be extended so that literature can give insight into the behaviours and feelings of others which is necessary for empathy, tolerance and conflict resolution. In children's stories, there are conflicts that young learners can identify with. This identification enables them to empathise with characters experiencing conflicts and difficulties. After reading a story, learners' discussion of its conflicts provides them with an opportunity to discover their own solutions. These skills and insights can be used outside classroom because learners will need them when dealing with conflicts themselves. However, what is important here is that, when using a literary text to teach about the target culture, one should select texts (e.g. short stories or novels) that mirror the prevailing cultural values and traditions of a people, and avoid texts that portray outdated customs and beliefs that may lead the learner with impressions of 'funny', 'weird', or even 'dumb' (Ibid). When selecting a literary text, it is important that learners of a foreign or second language should be aware that literary texts are productions of people who have their own views and values. The subjective nature of literary texts may or may not always reflect aspects about an entire society, but they may reflect a personal and subjective reality about their authors.

Byram (1997: 5) defines intercultural competence as 'the understanding of feelings, both one's own and those of others, and the ability to tolerate and empathise with people of other cultures'. Similarly, Goldman (Goldman, 1995: 35) discusses the concept of 'emotional intelligence' which, in addition to Byram's intercultural competence, includes the ability to use this understanding in making decisions in life. It is also the 'ability to maintain an optimistic outlook in the face of difficulties'. According to him, emotional intelligence is learnt through experience, and interaction with others. He goes further to argue that, in childhood, brain circuits are shaped by repeated emotional lessons. Literature has the potential to provide the much- needed experiences that will promote emotional intelligence.

In the increasingly interrelated global world, literature becomes essential in the sense that it can develop language skills, intercultural awareness, and emotional intelligence that are high priorities and effective tools to achieve the optimistic outlook of creating a more just and peaceful world.

Section Two: Activities
Literary Texts and Language Activities
The activities designed and implemented when using literary texts for language teaching are different from those associated with 'literature teaching'. It is not the 'comment' or 'explain' that are the concern of this approach. This means, according to Carter et.al (1989:67) that

- Instead of imposing the activity ready-made upon the text, we turn the other way, allowing the text itself to suggest the nature of the activity. Not all approaches are suitable for all texts.
- By redefining the function of the text, the text becomes not the sole focus of activity; we look on it as one element in a set of linked activities. It is, therefore, not the beginning and end of all discussion.
- By treating the text in a variety of ways, literary texts can be presented in different shapes/forms and not merely as a static, immovable block of words. This can be achieved, for instance, by withholding the text until the end of the activity, by presenting only fragments of the text, and by placing the text in an unaccustomed setting.
- Activities can be devised not only by questions, but also given in the form of instructions, suggestions or prompts.

Such activities, which involve variety, response, flexibility and interaction, assume that the ideas in, and the discussion derived from them are valuable and necessary, and that they will be discussed collectively as much as individually, that response proceeds from an awareness of relationships between activities. The following are activities designed to shed light on the area where literature can be used as a source of materials in the language classroom.

Activity No. 1
The following activity is an attempt to consider the role of literature in transferring the culture of the target language, since culture is an essential component of a language.
Sheet A
'Culture in language learning is not an expendable fifth skill tacked on, so to speak, to the teaching of speaking, listening, reading, and writing'. (Kramsch, 1993:1)

Sheet B

'/Culture/ is always in the background, right from day one /.../ challenging [the good language learners'] ability to make sense of the world around them'. (Kramsch, 1993:1)
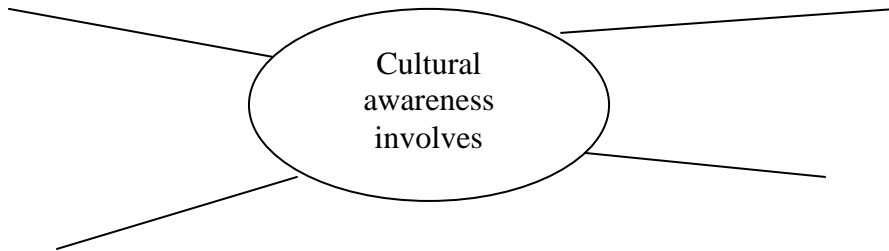

Figure 1 Mind map on Cultural Awareness

**Aim:** To consider literature as a medium which conveys the culture of the target group

- **Level:** Intermediate
- **Time:** (30 minutes)
- **Material:** Handouts A & B
- **Procedure:**
  - G/W: Handout A to one pair; handout B to another
  - P/W: discussion on quotations (10 mins.)
  - Report to other pair (10 mins.)
  (G/W: group work, P/W: pair work, Pl: plenary)
- **Feedback:**
  - Pl: sharing ideas on G/W (10 mins.)
    - Expected key points:
      - The link between language-literature-culture
      - The selection of literary texts: cultural free vs. cultural bound
      - Reading comprehension: linguistic vs. cultural difficulties
      - Methodology on teaching culture

Activity No. 2 (warming up activity)

This activity is designed to make students reflect on their reactions and to develop their ability to interact with literary materials. It is an attempt to enhance student-student interactions through using a literary material.

- With a few other students, look at this selection of pictures about *Animal Farm*. Talk about your reaction to them. Can you see anything that they have in common? Exchange ideas. (Source**:** George Orwell, *Animal Farm*. London: Secker and Warburg)
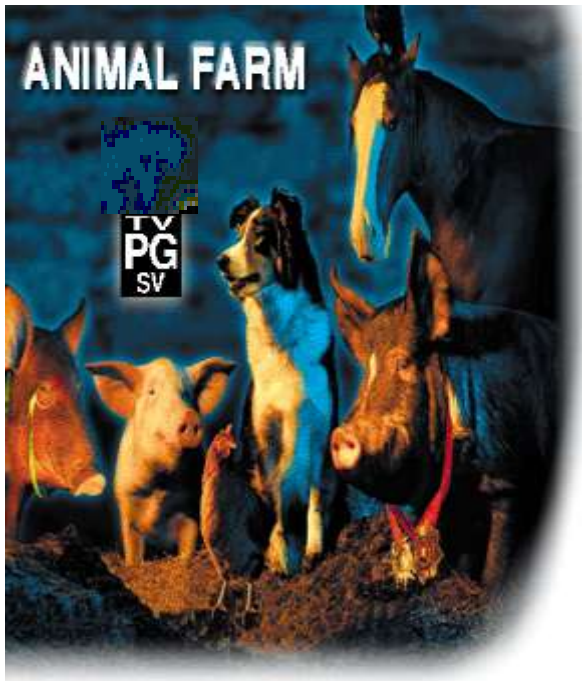
Aim: to make students anticipate the plot and respond to visual stimuli representing text.
Level: Intermediate to Advanced
Time: 60-70 minutes
Materials: Handouts A& B (Two different cover pages)
Procedure: G/W: Handout A to one group, handout B to another
            G/W: Discussion on cover pages (20 minutes)
            Report to another group (10 minutes)
Feedback: G/W: Sharing ideas (10 minutes)
            Anticipation of the plot (10 minutes)
            Answering questions and justifying answers (10 minutes)
            Response to visual stimuli [visual literacy] (5-10 minutes)
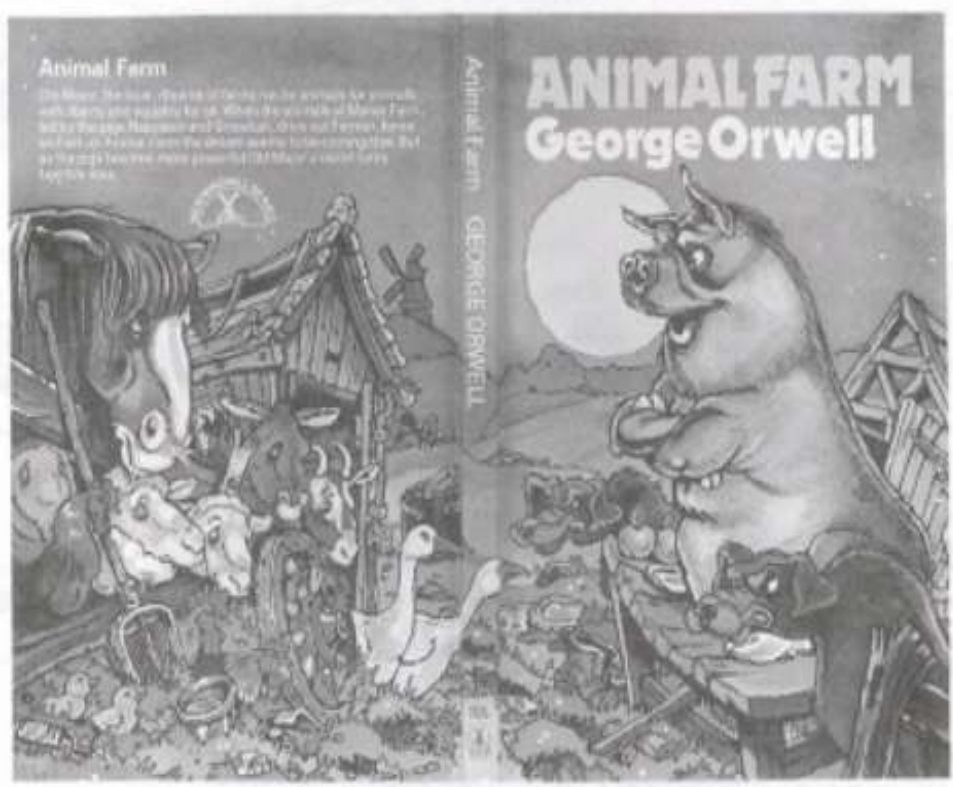   (Source**:** George Orwell, *Animal Farm*. London: Secker and Warburg)

Cover page A

Cover page B
Activity No.4
(Chapter and Verse: While reading activity)

Aim: selection of key points and impressions; subjective minisummaries
Level: Intermediate to Advanced

Question (1)
A. Read the first chapter of *Animal Farm*. While reading, provide an alternative chapter heading or a suggested title for it. (Keep a record of all your suggestions)
B. Write your suggestions down the page vertically. Then write associated ideas horizontally alongside the suggestion, the first letter of each idea being part of the vertical wording.
The following example is done to help you. Chapter 1 of *Animal Farm* was renamed 'Manor Farm' and read as follows:

M an is always the problem
A ………………
N ………………
O ………………
R ………………
F ……………...
A ………………
R ……………….
M an must go

Question (2)
Now do the same for chapter 2.

Activity No.5

(Grid and Reference: After reading activity)
Aim: Revision of character and characteristic through theme: generating discussion and reflection about characters
Level: Intermediate to Advanced

Question (1)

Here are the main characters in *Animal Farm*. Down the page is a list of qualities. Put a tick in the box if you feel the character possesses the quality to any degree.

Question (2)

Put a number out of ten in each box. Ten means that the character demonstrated this trait to a high degree. Discuss your ideas with a partner.

ATTRIBUTE, QUALITY, OR CHARACTERISTIC	THE DOGS	MULER	OLD MAJOR	SHEEP	PILINGTON	FREDRICK	WHYMPER	MR JONES	SQUEALER	MOSES	MOLLIE	BENJAMIN	BOXER	SNOWBALL	NAPOLEON
STRONG															
WEAK															
POOR															
RICH															
POLITE															
RUDE															
PATIENT															
GENEROUS															
EMOTIONAL															
BORING															
ATTRACTIVE															
QUIET															
FOOLISH															
WISE															
SINCERE															
FALSE															
ARROGANT															
TALENTED															
HUMBLE															
AGGRESSIVE															
INTELLIGENT															
ARTICULATE															
TACITURN															
TRUSTWORTHY															
EFFICIENT															
ENERGETIC															
LAZY															
CYNICAL															
NAÏVE															

Question (3)

In what situations have you felt similarly to any of the characters? What persons, places or ideas from your own experience came to mind while you were reading? Try to list at least two associations.

Conclusion and Suggestions

The central strand in my discussion is that the introduction of literary texts in the language classroom can foster the process of reflection and develop the skills of learning. Literary texts are examples of language in use. They are instances of real communication

in real social contexts. Consequently, they can reveal meanings and patterns which are not normally revealed by the more traditional language texts. The relationships between characters in novels, the nature of spoken voice in both prose and poetry, and the patterns in narrative organization can be exploited in the learning process to create an imaginative atmosphere which is more stimulating than normal language texts. By appropriate selection of literary texts, the use of literature in ELT becomes more appealing and stimulating source which can be extended outside classroom to include real life situations in the learner's career.

Therefore, literature is recommended as interesting and most useful materials in EFL in the Syrian context. It is suggested as an effective tool in order to enhance the learning/teaching process.

It is also equally important that curriculum developers depart from the traditional view attached to literature as *imaginative* and *far from everyday life*. It is literature which generates creativity in language and imagination and should feature in any educational system that regards discovery and enjoyment as essential components of the learning process.

In short, it is hoped that by using literature in ELT in the already mentioned context, language classes can become more effective, interesting and useful in order to help students develop their language skills.

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