



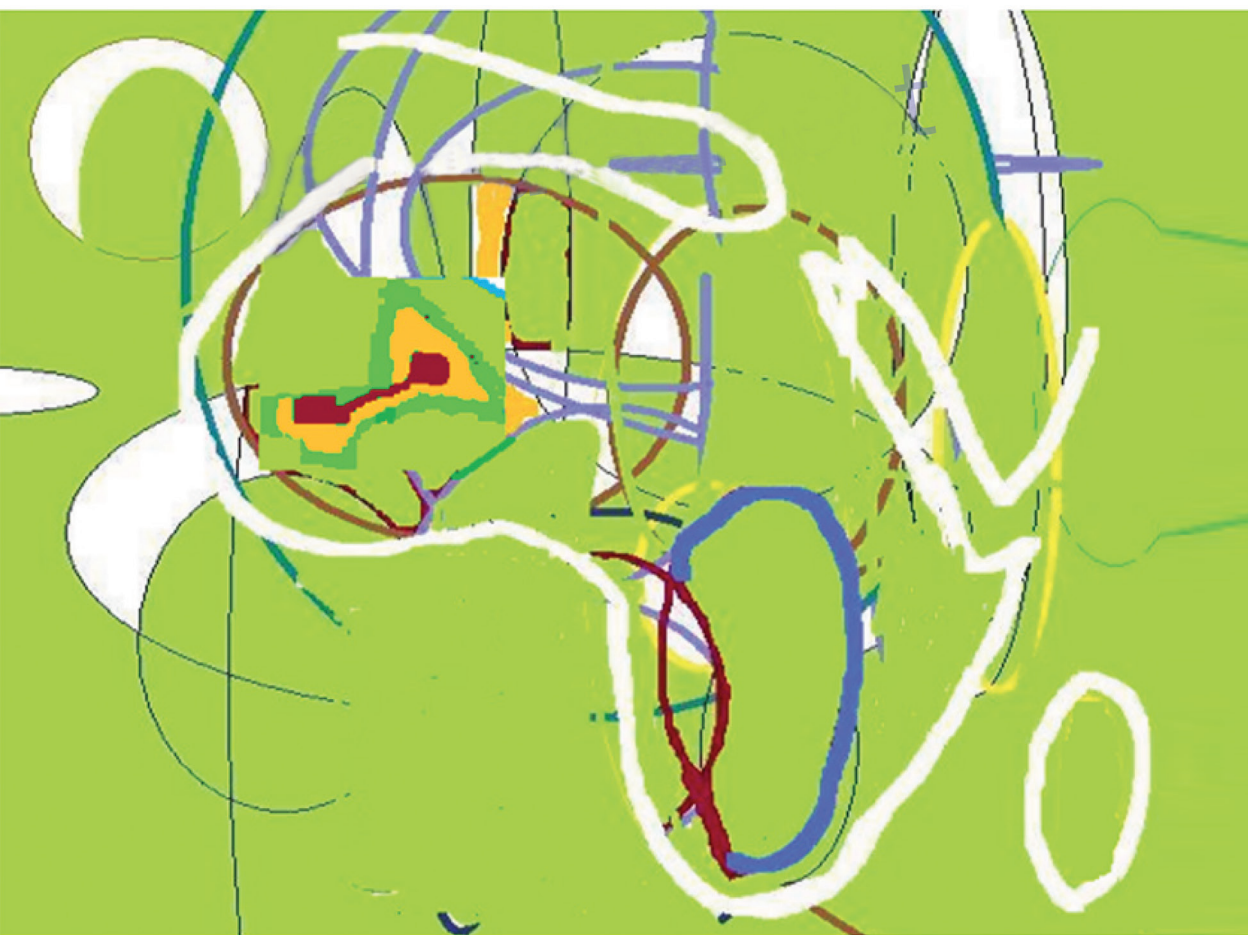
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CROSS-FERTILIZATION: LITERATURE AND LANGUAGE TEACHING TO NON-NATIVE STUDENTS AT THE UNDERGRADUATE LEVEL, INTEGRATING HUMANITIES¹¹

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ABSTRACT:

Cross-fertilization between language and literary studies is a cornerstone of theoretical approach to teaching. It could be defined as the fruitful interchange between language and literature, especially of a broadening or productive nature. It is designed to offer teachers a rationale and a variety of innovative and daring techniques for integrating literature work with language teaching and to play to the strengths of programs that combine the study of English Language and Literature: their ability to cross the divide. Most of, if not all, our students have their feet in both areas, taking English language or linguistics combined with literary studies, and obviously, have a stake in the approach. This paper revisits the theory of interaction and its appropriateness, addresses some difficulties experienced in using literature in the language classroom like bridging the gap of fantasy, reviews some methodological approaches quested after, and advocates the integration of humanities in support of language and literary studies.

KEYWORDS: applied linguistics, cross-fertilization, humanities, language teaching, literature teaching.

RESUME :

L'échange fécond entre les études de langue et de littérature est l'un des fondements de l'approche théorique de l'enseignement. Il pourrait se définir comme l'interaction fructueuse entre langue et littérature. Il se réalise en particulier dans le sens de l'élargissement et la production de meilleurs résultats. Il est conçu pour offrir à l'enseignant les principes fondamentaux et une large gamme de techniques novatrices/audacieuses d'intégration de l'enseignement de l'œuvre littéraire et de la langue.

¹¹ First published in March 1995 as a contribution to the seminar *Research Directions in the Department of English*, Université de Cocody-Abidjan. Revised and updated to acknowledge and incorporate advances in the field.

L'objectif est de tirer le meilleur parti des programmes d'enseignement combinant étude de langue et littérature et de développer leur aptitude à « réduire la fracture ». Nos étudiants, dans leur grande majorité, si ce n'est dans leur totalité, ont un pied dans chaque camp : ils prennent des cours de langue ou de linguistique parallèlement aux études littéraires et sont naturellement intéressés de savoir ce que l'approche peut leur apporter. Cet article réexamine la théorie de l'interaction et le bien-fondé de la pratique ; il se penche sur les difficultés rencontrées dans l'utilisation de la littérature au cours de langue, celles liées notamment au fantastique ; il passe en revue certaines approches méthodologiques mise en avant et préconise l'intégration des sciences humaines en appui aux études de langue et de littérature.

MOTS-CLES : enseignement de la langue, enseignement de la littérature, enrichissement mutuel, linguistique appliquée, sciences humaines.

INTRODUCTION

For the common people, literature and language could hardly cohabit or be reconciled owing to their very nature and the objective they aim at. Indeed, language is realistic whereas literature, as fiction, is fantastic. To the mind of the linguist, language is neutral, “something that is”, whereas literature is a mode of language utilization and expression. True that both are instruments of communication, but language aims at clarity, precision, univocity or monosemy in order to play fully its role of communication. On the other hand, literature seeks plurality. Since literary texts create their own system of language, they inevitably convey a different reality. In short, whereas language tends towards unicity, literature aims at complexity. Therefore, we may wonder with C. J. Brumfit and R. A. Carter (1986, p. 5) how a sub-product like literature, a translinguistic discourse, a discourse “crossing through” and involving more than mere systems of language, could complete or even enrich the raw material of language.

Literature has a different relationship to reality it mirrors: it depends upon language with its external reality for its raw material and interpretability. As W. T. Littlewood (1976, p. 19-26) puts it, “After selecting elements from external reality, the literary texts proceed to combine these elements into a new portion of reality which exists only within the text.” In other words, fiction has its own grammar and logic which are different from or parallel to our codes. For example, it refuses to stand the true/false proceedings and to be a mere copy of reality, which takes it to seek the disseminating plural. According to C. J. Brumfit and R. A. Carter (1986, p. 9), literature is not a language variety, as the literary text is almost the only “context” where different varieties of language can be mixed and still be admitted. On the contrary, any deviation from norms of lexis and syntax in ordinary language and legal documents would be

confusing, if not inadmissible. But in fiction, different levels of formality, mutually exclusive lexis, and variable syntax (varieties of journalism, military discourse, slang, archaism, etc.) may coexist because the poet judges such heterogeneity as appropriate to his purpose.

Yet, once learners have overcome the complexities of literature, relating mainly to the fantastic nature of the discipline, they find themselves discovering similarities between language and literature, and even grasping their mutual enrichment. Faced with the many methodological choices open to it for cross-fertilizing literature and language, our Institution would advocate a better integration of the humanities taught, mainly the sciences relating to linguistics, culture, and literary theory and criticism, which are assumed to be complementary in the teaching and learning of both disciplines.

1. BRIDGING THE GAP OF FANTASY

Literature is characterized by its subversive, plural and playful nature. True that the text is held in language as R. Barthes (1971, p. 227) explains: “it exists only when caught up in a discourse. But it is spoken according to (or against) certain rules. Similarly, the “Text” does not stop at (good) literature; it cannot be caught up in a hierarchy, or even in a simple distribution of genres. What constitutes it is on the contrary (or precisely) its force of subversion with regard to the old classifications. If the Text raises problems of classification, it is because it always implies a certain *experience of limits* (to take up Philippe Sollers’ expression). The Text is what is situated at the limit of the rules of the speech-act (rationality, readability, etc.). It attempts to locate itself very specifically *behind* the limit of the *doxa* (public opinion, defined by its limits, energy of exclusion, or censorship); taking the word literally, we might say that the Text is always *paradoxical*”¹². Some critics would go further and say that the text is *ungrammatical*, that is a certain way of speaking, of behaving.

Commenting on the paradoxical nature of the text, G. Genette (1966, p. 129-132) advances that a sustainable work is always open to ambiguity, an infinite plasticity: “Literature is an inexhaustible thing for the good reason that a sole book is so. The book is not a closed entity, it is a center of innumerable relations”¹³. As he puts it:

literature is this plastic field, this curved space where the most unexpected relations, and the most paradoxical meetings are all the time possible. The meaning of the books is always in front of them, not behind them, it is within us: a book is not a meaning already existing, a revelation that we have to put up with / to be

¹² Roland Barthes, « De l’œuvre au texte », *Revue d’esthétique* 3 (1971), p. 227. Translated by Richard Howard, Roland Barthes, “From Work to Text” in *The Rustle of Language*, 1989, University of California Press, Berkeley and Los Angeles, California, pp. 57-58.

¹³ Jorge Luis Borges, *Enquêtes 1937-1952*, p. 119. Quoted by Gérard Genette in « L’Utopie littéraire », *Figures*, Seuil, 1966, pp. 129-132

subjected to; it is a reserve of forms waiting for their meaning, it is the imminence of a revelation which does not happen¹⁴.

Similarly, J. Ricardou (1971, p. 33-38) asserts that:

literature does not develop in a homogeneous space. The described object is indisputably an unstable being, swaying continually between two irreconcilable tensions: the referential dimension and the literal dimension, which are not only immeasurable but inversely proportional too: the reader's attention can but focus on one dimension to the detriment of the other¹⁵.

Adopting the definitions of the narrative given by Genette in his « Discours du récit » in *Figure III* and by Tzvetan Todorov in *Dictionnaire encyclopédique des sciences du langage*¹⁶, Ricardou concludes in *Le Nouveau roman* that:

The narrative is a referential text with temporality represented, where “referent” is understood as “an extralinguistic reality”, a real or imaginary *universe*. The narrated event is the effect of the layout of writing in *reference* to a given event, real or imaginary: what we call *fiction*. It follows that fiction has a paradoxical status and that the narrative cannot enjoy a solid base. It is the place of a permanent conflict, compelled to the subtle, tricky, sometimes byzantine game of the euphoric and the contesting, and unable to wall itself up in one territory¹⁷.

Referentiality, paradoxy, and heterogeneity would suggest that the text is approached and experienced in relation to the sign. According to R. Barthes (1971, p. 227-128), it practices the infinite postponement of the signified:

the Text is dilatory; its field is that of the signifier. Signifier means here “the aftermath of the meaning”. Similarly, the signifier's infinitude refers to the notion of play; the engendering of the perpetual signifier is achieved by a serial movement of dislocations, overlappings, or variations. The logic governing the Text is not comprehensible (trying to define what the work “means”) but metonymic: the activity of associations, contiguities, or cross-references coincides with a liberation of symbolic energy. The Text is radically symbolic. It is thus restored to language;

14 Gérard Genette, « L'Utopie littéraire », *Figures*, Seuil, 1966, pp. 129-132. My translation.

15 Jean Ricardou, « De Natura Fictionis », *Pour une théorie du nouveau roman*, Seuil, 1971, pp. 33-38. My translation.

16 Gérard Genette, *Figure III*, Seuil, 1972, pp. 71 et 72 ; Oswald Ducrot et Tzvetan Todorov, *Dictionnaire encyclopédique des sciences du langage*, Seuil, 1972, p. 378.

17 Jean Ricardou, *Le Nouveau roman*, Seuil, 1973, pp. 26-31. My translation.

like language, it is structured but decentered, without closure¹⁸.

To say that the text is plural does not mean only that it has several meanings but that it fulfils the very plurality of meaning: an *irreducible* plurality:

The Text is not coexistence of meaning, but passage, traversal; hence, it depends not on an interpretation, however liberal, but on an explosion, on dissemination. The plurality of the Text depends, as a matter of fact, not on the ambiguity of its contents, but on what we might call the stereographic or stereophonic plurality of the signifiers which weave it¹⁹.

Etymologically, the text is a fabric, entirely woven of quotations, references, echoes: cultural languages, antecedent or contemporary, which traverse it through and through, in a vast stereophony, as Barthes explains:

The intertextuality in which any text is apprehended, since it is itself the intertext of another text, cannot be identified with some origin of the text. The Text might indeed take for its motto the words of the man possessed by devils, the Gerasene Demoniac: “My name is legion, for we are many”²⁰.

According to J. Derrida (1972, p. 71-72), this plural or demonic texture is hidden:

A text is not a text unless it hides from the first comer, from the first glance, the law of its composition and the rules of its game. Moreover, a text remains forever imperceptible. Its laws and rules [...] can never be booked, *in the present*, into anything that could rigorously be called a perception.

In the same perspective, F. Ducros asserts that the nature of the text is to be an “invisible presence”: what is given is hidden²¹. This paradox establishes the quality of the text. Indeed, for Derrida, “The dissimulation of the woven texture can in any case take centuries to undo its web: a web that envelops a web”²². Dissimulation introduces the notion of game, so dear to fiction:

the text is a web to undo, an organism to reconstitute, a tissue of threads that one must know how to embroider. To embroider means to have the ability to follow the thread, given and hidden at the same time²³.

18 Roland Barthes, « De l'œuvre au texte », *Revue d'esthétique* 3 (1971), pp. 227-28. Translated by Richard Howard, Roland Barthes, “From Work to Text” in *The Rustle of Language*, 1989, University of California Press, Berkeley and Los Angeles, California, pp. 58-59.

19 Roland Barthes, « De l'œuvre au texte », *Revue d'esthétique* 3 (1971), p. 228. Translated by Richard Howard, Roland Barthes, “From Work to Text” in *The Rustle of Language, op. cit.*, pp. 59-60.

20 Mark 5:9. Quoted by Roland Barthes, « De l'œuvre au texte », *Revue d'esthétique* 3 (1971), p. 229. Translated by Richard Howard, Roland Barthes, “From Work to Text” in *The Rustle of Language, op. cit.*, p. 60.

21 Franc Ducros, « Le texte, présence invisible », *Questions de sémiotique*, 1973, pp. 44-50. My translation.

22 Jacques Derrida, “Plato's Pharmacy”, *Dissemination*. Translated by Barbara Johnson. University of Chicago Press, Chicago, 1981, pp. 62-117.

23 Jacques Derrida, « La pharmacie de Platon », in *La dissémination*, Seuil, 1972, pp. 71-72. My translation.

In the same vein, J. Ricardou asserts that literature is not a transparent prose offering right away its intelligibility, but a resistance to overcome (a resistance ever renewed, each time promising a new order to establish), an intelligibility to decipher: “To decipher is to consider the text in its fabric as the place of a permanent problem, to know how to make oneself sensitive to all procedures of meaning production”²⁴. For F. Ducros, the reader faces a complex object (the text) which has its own coherence, by being (by having) *another* coherence, *another* logic equally complex, determined by cultural references:

Under these conditions, a game (reading) is established between the logic of the text and the logic of the reader. In this way, reading appears as a product: product of the encounter between the logic of the text and the logic of the reader. From the game set up by the act of reading results a third logic, this of reading²⁵.

Rather than a product, it is a *production* that J. Kristeva (1968, p. 298-300) perceives in the text. Indeed, beyond a discourse (object of exchange and communication) of society, the text is “a process of meaning production, not a structure already made but a structuring: an apparatus which produces and transforms meaning before putting it into circulation”. The distinction between discourse and text puts the stress on the production of meaning rather than on the exchange of meaning (or communication). Of course, the text cannot be read outside the language, but it is to be defined as a *translinguistic apparatus* that redistributes the order of the language. It is therefore a *productivity*: “its relationship to the language in which it is situated is redistributive (destructive-constructive); it is a permutation of texts, an intertextuality”²⁶.

O. Ducros and T. Todorov (1972, p. 443-48) are in complete agreement with Kristeva in determining the text as a productivity: “The text is a certain *mode of language functioning*. In contrast with any communicative and representative usage of language, it is essentially defined there as *productivity*”. In practice, a textual writing supposes that the descriptive vocation of language has been tactically evaded and that has been put in place a procedure that makes its generative power play to full capacity at the semantic, grammatical and signifier levels. This means that the text has always functioned as a *transgressive field* compared with the system according to which our perception, grammar, metaphysics and even science are organized: a system inseparably linked to the sign. But one cannot apprehend exactly what this definition covers unless one comes back with Julia Kristeva to the crucial term of *productivity*, by which one must understand that the text “makes of language a work” by going back to what precedes it.

The text operates a gap between language use, intended for representation and

24 Jean Ricardou, « La littérature comme critique », *Pour une théorie du nouveau roman*, Seuil 1971, pp. 24-25; Jean Ricardou, *Le nouveau roman*, Seuil 1973, pp. 70-71. My translation.

25 Franc Ducros, « Le texte, présence invisible », *Questions de sémiotique*, 1973, pp. 44-50. My translation.

26 Julia Kristeva, « Problèmes de la structuration du texte », Tel Quel, *Théorie d'ensemble*, Seuil, 1968, pp. 298-300. My translation.

comprehension, and the underlying volume of the signifying practices. “To work language is therefore to examine how it works. We will designate by significance this work of differentiation, stratification and confrontation which is practiced in the language”, O. Ducros and T. Todorov explain (1972, p. 443-48). The process of generating the signifying system is plural and differentiated *ad infinitum*:

It is the game without limits and center of the articulation possibilities generating meaning: *differentiated infinity, dynamic infinity*, so much so that the text should be said to be *translinguistic*: it does more than revising or modifying the grammatical, syntactic, and semantic rules²⁷.

To conclude with Jacques Derrida (1972, p. 109-198), the distinctive feature of the literary experience is to be a change of scenery in the sense of disorientation, an exercise of alienation, a great upheaval of our thoughts, perceptions, usual expressions, and intellect. This is so because writing is a *pharmakon* or drug (appearance, illusion, make-up), the product of a *pharmakos* (sorcerer, magician, illusionist). Indeed, it is no good *technè* (that is an art able to show what is clear, sure, stable)²⁸. From these reasons, the ordinary people yield to the temptation to categorize language and literature, and to eventually state that, owing to the complexity of the subject, a literary syllabus can start only when a certain level of language or reading competence is presumed. Naturally, the language professionals set up against this simple logic to claim that not only is there a relationship between the two elements, literary and language learning and teaching, but there is also an interplay between them and even varied ways in which their study can be integrated.

2. LITERATURE AND LANGUAGE TEACHING: A LONG HISTORY

J. Povey (1990, p. 123-124) reviewing *Literature and Language Teaching*, the reference work edited by Brumfit and Carter (1986), determines the “area of interaction between language, literature and education” and sets the background to the topic²⁹. Literature and language learning have shared a long history. The academic teaching of language has long assumed the reading of literature as its goal. Perhaps this derived from universities being seen as seats for the study of the classic languages. No one approached Latin or Greek as a means of conversation. When modern languages were introduced into the curriculum, their teaching was patterned on the classical procedures – translation and analysis. It was American pragmatism that changed this situation. Confronted with a new political global

²⁷ Oswald Ducros et Tzvetan Todorov, « Le texte comme productivité », *Dictionnaire encyclopédique des sciences du langage*, Seuil, 1972, pp. 443-48. My translation.

²⁸ Jacques Derrida, « La pharmacie de Platon », *La dissémination*, Seuil, 1972, pp. 109-198. My translation.

²⁹ John Povey, *Issues in Applied Linguistics*, Vol. 1 No. 1, 1990, pp. 123-124.

role, American linguists observed that distinguished international degrees in English did not advance the useful practice of verbal negotiation in the language. At that moment “Teaching English as a Second Language” (TESL), as opposed to “teaching English abroad”, truly began! It is true that the British had spent centuries working abroad, but quite simply they had not tried to do the same (that is the most useful) thing: make the non-native speakers talk!

From this more practical approach came the rejection of literature in the work of English as a Second Language (ESL) in favor of more useful occupations, such as pattern practice. Since literature was effete and elitist, its language verbose and baroque, it had no place in useful language work. This decision was sustained by two sources extreme in all else but their opposition to the inclusion of literature. The linguists delved ever more deeply into the fundamentals of language not daring to approach the complexities of poetics. The literary critics dismissed utility and denied access to the holy grail of the great tradition to all except the dedicated specialists. So it went on for several decades. Then questions were raised: students were not parrots and communication was set up as a goal beyond repetition. What would students communicate and where would they learn to do this?

Suddenly literature was recognized as a means by which native speakers extended their vocabulary and understanding. Might it not work for a non-native speaker who often actually enjoyed literature? The idea that literature can and should play an important even exciting part in ESL classes is thus just being considered³⁰. One is therefore interested in the way language and literature are related, that is the contribution of literature to language teaching and the share of language in a literature class.

To admit the principle of cross-fertilization between literature and language is to concede similarities between them. What could therefore these entities have in common? Both meet around the three notions of setting, content, and teaching strategies. First of all, literature and language share the same origin, the word, that each of them uses as its raw material. Secondly, both are means of communication caught up in the classical system of a sender, a message to decode, and a receiver. This is why a class of literature and a class of language would involve the same competences: speech, writing, listening, and reading. Beyond these skills, both resort to brainstorming, intuition, and cultural background through interaction between narrator, corpus, and narratee. Therefore, as advocated by Michael Short and Christopher Candlin, “literature and language teaching should be linked and made mutually reinforcing.”³¹

30 John Povey, *idem*.

31 Michael H. Short and Christopher N. Candlin (1986), “Teaching Study Skills for English Literature”, in *Literature and Language Teaching*. Ed. C. J. Brumfit and R. A. Carter. Oxford University press, 1991, p. 91.

The reasons in favor of their integration are varied. First, language and literature do not necessarily appear distinct to the learner, for whom literature is also language. Second, it is difficult to make a *linguistic* distinction between literature and other kinds of language. This simply means that we find it impossible to isolate any single property of language which is exclusive to a literary work. In other words, we believe with Brumfit and Carter that “there is no such thing as literary language which can be recognized and isolated in the same way as, say, the language of newspaper variety or weather forecasting. With the exception of poeticism (words fabricated for poetic purposes), there is no specialist lexis for literature”. This can be exemplified by the use of metaphor, phonology or connotation that literature and other disciplines like advertisement and the joke resort to.

Metaphor for example is not the distinguishing mark of literature, but is pervasive in our daily discourse and, as a property of language, is not in any way unique. The world of discussion and debate, parliamentary, journalistic, academic or otherwise, is impregnated with metaphors which regularly compare argument to the conduct of a battle: we say “to marshal an argument”, “to defend a position”, “to concede a point”, etc. Other features traditionally related with poetry like rhyme, meter, ambiguity, parallelism, deviation, and which turn up in literature also appear in abundance in advertising language (C. J. Brumfit and R. A. Carter, 1986, p. 6).

A possibly more substantial claim would have it that semantic density of language is more properly associated with literature. However, playing with the double-sidedness and multiple valency of certain word combinations is regularly to be found in jokes and advertisement as well. The riddle quoted by Brumfit and Carter “*What is black and white and red all over?*” and its answer which is “*A newspaper*” focus on the structural ambiguity in “red” and give two pieces of understanding: the adjective “red” of the color, and the past participle of the verb “to read” (C. J. Brumfit and R. A. Carter, 1986, p. 7).

Similarly, in the advertisement “*You can't see through a Guinness*” the ambiguity of “*see through*” is subtly played upon to mean “*transparency*” as well as “*honesty*”. You cannot see through a Guinness for many reasons: not only it is a dark, opaque beer, but also it is a good beer, considering that you “*see through*” things which are deceptive. It is also regularly noted that phonology is a distinguishing mark of poetic language. Yet, there are several instances in “ordinary language” where patterns of contrast, similarity and parallelism are to be found. Children’s games and songs like *Incy-wincy spider* or the Halloween *treat or trick* abound with these. So do the unavoidable proverb “*A stitch in time saves nine*” and the advertisement “*You'll never bite a better bit of butter in your life.*”³² The large scope of similarities which exist between literature and language

32 Sorting out a problem immediately may save extra work later; a little effort expended sooner to fix a small problem prevents it from becoming a larger problem requiring more effort to fix later; it is better to act or deal with problems immediately, because if you wait and deal with them later, things will get worse and the problems will take longer to deal with

enhances the capacity of these entities to interact.

4. THE CONTRIBUTION OF LITERATURE TO LANGUAGE

Owing to its very compressed, symbolic and plural nature, literature can be of great use for students learning a language, through interaction, interpretation, and creation. Brumfit and Carter (1991, p. 14) would agree with Widdowson in claiming that literature can encourage in students the ability to infer meanings by interacting with the text. That is, meaning being deliberately left unclear in a literary text, the nature of communication can be problematic, and the student has to search both backwards and forwards, in and across, and outside the text for clues which might help to make sense of it. Such training in deciphering the communication is a crucial factor in the development of language learning abilities. Suffice it to mention here the creative powers through interaction, enrichment through cultural and stylistic background, and reinforcement of skill acquisition.

Stepping into literature, the reader is asked, as Littlewood envisions, to recreate the textual reality in his mind: using evidence from the language of the text and from his own knowledge of the world. His creative or “co-creative” role, and the imaginative involvement engendered by this role, encourage a dynamic interaction between himself, the text, and the external world. In the course of this exercise, the reader is constantly seeking to form and retain a coherent picture of the text world³³. The potential of literature to express both cultural values and universal human values, its study can promote internal as well as international communication.

The possibly static and unquestionable reality of the informational text is replaced here by “a fluid, dynamic reality, in which there is no final arbiter between truth and falsehood. There is a possibility of a meaningful dialogue”, Littlewood suggests (Brumfit, 1987, p. 48). This fluidity of representation and active interaction prohibits restriction to formulaic language practice. What is more, literary texts often contain within them a number of different varieties of English. These can thus be extremely useful in sensitizing learners of English to linguistic variation and the values associated with different varieties. Seeing literature along a continuum of discourse styles can help students to develop sensitivity to all language use as well as foster acquisition of those kinds of sense-making procedures (Brumfit, 1987, p. 20).

It is often in its deviation from the norms of English grammatical and lexical usage that literature achieves excellence. Indeed, the learner is called upon to identify these categories of deviation: lexical (affixation like *foresuffer*, compounding, functional conversation), grammatical (in morphology, syntax), semantic (with the metaphor and personification),

³³ William T. Littlewood, quoted in Brumfit “Concepts and Categories in Language Teaching Methodology”, 1987, pp. 14-15.

and register (of which dialect and archaism). In this perspective, the cultural background brought in by the literary text can be positive in terms of acquisition. A benefit for struggling with the potential cultural problem of literature is that it may promote the student's own creativity, increase their understanding of that culture, and perhaps spur their own imaginative writing. As Northrop Frye puts it, "the end of literary teaching is not simply the admiration of literature; it's something more like the transfer of imaginative energy from literature to the students"³⁴.

Assumptions behind the use of literary extracts in the teaching of EFL (reading, listening, translation, discussion) are undoubtedly logic, vocabulary acquisition or extension, exact syntax, among others. To the extent that students enjoy reading literature, it may ultimately increase their reading proficiency, Sandra McKay asserts³⁵. In short, literature offers several benefits to ESL classes. Literature teaching and study supplements language learning. It enriches language and allows a variety of emphases and perspectives. Literature being language at its most vigorous, keeps language healthy. As such, it is ideal for developing an awareness of language use. Indeed, a sensitive stylistic analysis of a text can produce facts about its linguistic organization.

Shodhganga Repository³⁶ summarizes the arguments in favor of teaching literature at the under-graduate TESL classes in seven major gains: literature supports and enriches the learners' knowledge of the language system (by increasing competence in the language); literature exemplifies language use (through contextualization and the appropriate use of codes: drama, fiction, verse). These first two points relate to the linguistic criterion which defends the importance of literature as a source of genuine authentic texts. These provide the learner with real examples of a wide range of styles, text types and registers. Literature also enlivens the process of learning: it procures enjoyment and sustains the habit of reading. This comes closer to the motivational criterion. What is more, literary texts help "to stimulate the imagination of students, to develop their critical abilities, and to increase their emotional awareness"³⁷, as much as their pleasure in reading. Students usually get engaged in the plot of the story, commonly feeling close to their favorite characters. This motivating engagement creates a positive general effect on the processes of learning and language acquisition.

34 Northrop Frye, *The Educational Imagination*, Bloomington, Indiana University Press, 1964, p. 129.

35 Sandra McKay, *Literature in the ESL Classroom*, p. 531, in *TESOL Quarterly*, Vol. 16, No. 4 (Dec., 1982), pp. 529-536.

36 Shodhganga Repository (the reservoir of Indian theses), [Chapter 3: Relevance of Literature to TESL Classes at the Undergraduate Level](http://shodhganga.inflibnet.ac.in/bitstream/10603/319/10/10_chapter3.pdf), pp. 74-82. Retrieved from shodhganga.inflibnet.ac.in/bitstream/10603/319/10/10_chapter3.pdf

37 G. Lazar, *Literature and Language Teaching*. Cambridge: CUP, 1993, p. 19.

Coming along with the motivational criterion is the methodological criterion, which refers to the possibility of multiple interpretations and different opinions commonly generated by literary texts. This leads students to a real interaction with the text, with their fellow students and with the teacher. That is to say, the student is required to be central to the learning process. Literature also provides access to the culture of the target-language speaking community. This is the cultural criterion: literature enables students “to understand and appreciate cultures and ideologies different from their own in time and space, and to come to perceive traditions of thought and feeling and artistic form in those cultures”, as R. A. Carter and M. N. Long (1991, p. 2) put it. What is more, literature develops creativity among ESL learners by providing models of successful writers in their target language. As such, it paves the way for literary studies: acquaintance with the literary mode of communication of the second language, it is assumed, will contribute to the learners’ critical ability in reading and interpreting literature. At last, literature develops intellectual, humanistic, moral and aesthetic perceptions: it provides the learners with deeper insight into human nature. All these arguments are put forward as a justification for the teaching of literature in language programs.

5. THE CONTRIBUTION OF LANGUAGE TO LITERATURE

Because language precedes and generates fiction, its contribution to the making of literature comes out more obviously. The input of linguistics to literary study and teaching concerns stylistics, the study of literary discourse from a linguistic orientation, as defined by H. Widdowson (1975, p. 3) for whom it involves both literary criticism and linguistics. As preliminaries, one might like to quote linguistic awareness and cultural acquisition. Actually, as acknowledged by C. J. Brumfit and R. A. Carter (1986, p. 29), literary response only really starts when fluent reading has already been established. And the reading of literature is predicated upon a basic competence in general reading. Indeed, language remains the basic raw material. This being so, literature takes advantage from language when certain preliminary abilities have been developed side by side with story-telling, nursery rhymes, words games, and personal narratives. In this context, the switch to the written mode does not entail a switch to a completely different set of premises. Indeed, linguistic structures influence literature, as well as the other way round.

In terms of cultural acquisition, Graham Trengove argues that awareness of language varieties can be an important prerequisite for responding sensitively to literary language use. Writers often exploit the capacities of a language to express shifts in social contexts, role relations, emotional association, and so on. They produce particular effects by

subtly and strikingly deviating from expected codes or contextual norms³⁸. Therefore, the development of awareness of language varieties in use is crucial to an adequate teaching of literature in a foreign language. Here, the student is to consider a course on civilization as enlightening. Similarly, in class, there are some language-based activities which can lead to fruitful appreciation of literary uses of language, and which can therefore run parallel or antecedent to close linguistic-stylistic examination of a text: the technique of “summary” or paraphrase with its two styles, which are the explanatory (that summarizes or re-words) and the mimetic (that echoes or parodies).

In short, linguistic analysis becomes an integral aspect of the process of understanding literature, a means of formulating intuition, cultural background, and interpretation. At this stage, all language specialists assert the pre-eminence of language over literature: poems for instance do not create their meanings and logic out of nothing. Literature being primarily a work of language, literary appreciation must include linguistic material. In Widdowson’s opinion, a literary text can be constructed as a “secondary language system”, “a micro language” formed by the relation which the writer has set up between the language items within a text³⁹. Language, thus, is central to literature. For instance, it ensures how a poem is linked to the outside world. As every language situation is defined culturally as well as linguistically, one must focus one’s attention on the use of language. The poetic use of language invariably involves a deviant ordering or a specialized structuring but this does not supersede the pre-eminence of language nor does it annul complementarity.

6. THE METHODOLOGICAL QUEST

It is agreed with R. Carter and M. Long (1991, p. 2-3) that literature and language teaching and learning involve the development of a feeling for language, of responses to “texts” in both written and spoken discourses. In both cases, the receiver resorts to many common techniques: interpretative conventions like induction and deduction, creative response and interaction. Because they have much in common in terms of linguistic, cultural and skill acquisition, literature and language can be seen in a process of constant rich cross-fertilization: material sharing.

At the outset was the Word/*Logos*⁴⁰. God used it to create the heavens and the earth, the linguist and the poet to set up the world of language and fiction. So, all Nature, fiction,

38 In Brumfit and Carter, *Literature and Language Teaching*, *op. cit.*, p. 38.

39 H.G. Widdowson, “Stylistics” *Contemporary Criticism: An Anthology*, ed., V.S. Seturaman (Madras: McMillan), 1989, p. 156.

40 “In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God” (John 1, 1). The Word, the Greek *logos*, combines God’s dynamic, creative word, personified pre-existent Wisdom as the instrument of God’s creative activity, and the ultimate intelligibility of reality. “*With God*” connotes communication with another”. Donald Senior and John J. Collins (Editors). *The Catholic Study Bible*. The New American Bible 1990. This Second edition 2006. Oxford University Press, p. 1403.

and language share the same origin: the magic word. As speech is mystic in the mouth of God, so it is wonderful in the mouth of the baby, and ecstatic in the mouth of the poet. Knowledge of one of these instruments of communication reinforces the acquisition and appreciation of the other one. It allows us to conclude with Roman Jakobson that “A linguist deaf to the poetic function of language and a literary scholar indifferent to linguistic problems and unacquainted with linguistic methods are equally flagrant anachronisms”⁴¹.

At this stage, the question is not whether there is an active interaction between language and literature but rather how literature can be integrated for the benefit of students and what the most effective procedures are. In fact, evidence demonstrates that literature provides a motivating drive for language learning and teaching due to its spectacular features not readily found in any other types of texts. All is therefore in the methods used to strengthen the interplay between the text, the teacher and the student. The success in the acquisition of a language is often determined by the students’ interest and enthusiasm for the material used in the language classroom, the level of their persistence with the learning task, and the level of their concentration and enjoyment, as advocated by G. Crookes and R. W. Schmidt (1991)⁴². This type of students’ personal involvement might come from the material and lessons used in the classroom.

Literary texts should be selected carefully and used in an appropriate way (in terms of linguistic, cultural and cognitive complexity) to match the profile of the readers. First, they are interesting and stimulating to the readers if they suit their levels: novels, short stories, and one-plays with contemporary relevance are ideal genres. They can also be contrasted with other discourses like history, sports literature, young adult fiction, science fiction, essays and biographies so that learners can easily identify the different communicative functions of language. Second, they are original, exciting, and thought-provoking. Third, they are authentic texts in the sense that they represent real language in context to which the reader can respond directly. Fourth, their discussion and exploration of content would inevitably and naturally lead them onto the examination of language since what is said is closely bound up with how it is said. Above all, literary texts in language classes relieve English language learners of monotony and boredom that often characterize the English language classroom. Learners get a real-life-like chance on fundamental human issues that are not only enduring, but also transcending both time and culture.

Learners are exposed to different linguistic uses, forms, and conventions of the written mode like irony, exposition, argument, and narration. They can also familiarize with thoughts, feelings, customs, possessions, dreams, aspirations, beliefs, and fear

41 Jakobson 1960: 377, (in Thomas A. Sebeok ed. *Style in Language*, New York: Wiley, 1960). Quoted by Brumfit and Carter, *Literature and Language Teaching*, *op. cit.*, p. 5.

42 Graham Crookes and Richard W. Schmidt (1991). “Motivation: Reopening the research agenda”, *Language Learning*, 41 (4), pp. 469-512.

of a particular culture. An understanding of all this is important for intercultural communication later in their social and professional life. Besides, extensive reading of literary texts increases learners' receptive vocabulary with different shades of semantic value. As for teachers, they are called upon to extend their role as facilitators: change from being disseminators of received knowledge of literary texts to becoming guides, facilitators of the learning process.

We agree with J. Hill (1986, p. 108) that the role of the teacher in this enrichment is an essential, but intricate one. It is, in effect, a balancing act between explaining how the language is made up and making plain what it is trying to say. A lot must therefore be left to the teacher's intuition as to how much information, help and advice the students need: "but assuming the right balance is found, students can hope to derive both pleasure and profit, wisdom and delight from their study of literature"⁴³. The role of the teacher is all the more complex as there are still key issues that need more empirical research. One consists in validating some new approaches to the integration of literature in a language classroom. Another one is knowing the learners' response to reading literature in a foreign language. A third one relates to evaluating different language courses based on literature components as well as students' perspective.

In front of the difficulties encountered in the use of literature in the language classroom (language itself, cultural issues, text selection among others), making learning a highly demanding activity, devising methodological approaches on how to use literary texts proves necessary, as advocated by Jelena Bobkina and Elena Dominguez⁴⁴. Though most scholars admit the multiple advantages of literature in the field of language teaching, consensus on the implementation of literary texts in the EFL classroom is still far from being reached. Possible causes are to be found in the multiplicity of theories on literature teaching and assessment. It is difficult to think of a universal way to introduce literary texts in the EFL classroom that would fit every single teacher's needs and interests. For instance, some teachers prioritize grammar and vocabulary while others put the emphasis on the stylistic features, still leaving a niche to those who consider it especially attractive to work with students' personal experiences. Other key factors to be equally considered are the linguistic competence of the learners and their specific needs, the socio-cultural context of the learning process, or the characteristics of the literary text used in the classroom.

A work of literature can be approached in a number of ways. An understanding of these approaches is crucial for teachers to determine the best way "to use the resources provided by literary texts with the purpose of improving language learning programs",

43 Jennifer Hill, *Using Literature in Language Teaching*, Essential Language Teaching Series (ELTS), Macmillan, 1986, p. 108.

44 "The Use of Literature and Literary Texts in the EFL Classroom: Between Consensus and Controversy," *International Journal of Applied Linguistics & English Literature*, Vol. 3, No. 2, March 2014, Australian International Academic Centre, Australia (IACA), pp. 252-57.

A. Bagherkazemi asserts⁴⁵. Some main approaches to teaching literature in the EFL classroom that already exist are exposed by Wellek and Warren, Maley, Carter and Long, Lima, and Van among others. R. Wellek and A. Warren (1984)⁴⁶ distinguish between intrinsic and extrinsic approaches to literature. The first focuses specifically on the text while the second seeks to go deeper into the social, political and historical events which constitute the framework of the text. A. Maley (1989)⁴⁷ distinguishes between “the study of literature” as a cultural artefact and “the use of literature as a resource for language learning”. At the same time, the author subdivides these approaches into “the critical literary approach” (which demands highly specific linguistic background knowledge) and “the stylistic approach” (which mainly focuses on linguistic competence).

As for R. Cater and M. Long (1991)⁴⁸, they defend three main models for literature teaching which they especially design so as to make literature fit in the EFL programs: the cultural model, the language model, and the personal growth model. The first considers literature as an ideal vehicle to transmit cultural notions such as history, literary theories, genres, etc., and treats language as a cultural artefact, requiring learners to approach literary texts from social, political, literary and historical perspectives. The second considers literature to be aimed at language development and awareness, and sees literary texts as a wide source of contextualized linguistic features. The third gives priority to personal experience as a means to engage students in the reading process. Learners’ interaction with literary texts is intended to enhance their personal development and language awareness.

C. Lima (2005)⁴⁹ defends two main approaches to teaching literature: intuitive analysis and syntactic analysis. Literary and cultural aspects of the texts are put aside, giving preference to such phenomena as language organization and readers’ responses. Intuitive analysis focuses on readers’ spontaneous response to the text, whereas syntactic analysis explores the linguistic organization of the text. It shows how what is said is said and how meanings are made. Lima pays special attention to the linguistic organization of the text since syntax is the “basis from which students can proceed to decode the text and construct its meaning”⁵⁰.

45 Alemi M. Bagherkazemi (2010), Literature in the EFL/ESL classroom: Consensus and controversy. *LiBRI. Linguistic and Literary Broad Research and Innovation*, 1 (1), 1-12.

46 Rene Wellek and Austin Warren, *Theory of Literature*, New Revised Edition, Harvest Books, 1984.

47 Alan Maley, “Down from the Pedestal: Literature as Resource” *Literature and the Learner: Methodological Approaches*. Cambridge, Modern English Publications, 1989.

48 Ronald A. Cater and Michael N. Long (1991), *Teaching Literature*, London, Longman. In *The Use of Literature and Literary Texts in the EFL Classroom; Between Consensus and Controversy*, International Journal of Applied Linguistics & English Literature, Vol. 3 No. 2, March 2014, pp. 253-254

49 Chris Lima (2005), “Is the rest silence ...?” *IATEFL* (186). In *The Use of Literature and Literary Texts in the EFL Classroom; Between Consensus and Controversy*, op. cit., p. 254.

50 Chris Lima (2005), *ibid*.

7. THE INTEGRATIVE APPROACH

These examples suffice to indicate that the very many categorizations show the need to agree on methodological approaches to literature teaching, so much so that the trend is towards an integrative approach to literature teaching. Most scholars indicate that none of the approaches to literature teaching in the EFL classroom of the ones mentioned above is complete enough to be implemented independently. Not surprisingly, the last decades attempted to combine different approaches to enhance the use of literature as an effective tool in language acquisition and to promote empirical research. Hanauer analyses the role of the poetry reading task for foreign language learning⁵¹. Butler provides an example of an attempt to incorporate literature into language classes in a South African context⁵².

More and more Departments of Foreign Languages combine linguistics, literature, and even civilization for an effective teaching of the foreign language, as in the case of our Institution. Indeed, our experience on the ground as a teacher of English, literature, civilization, and literary theory shows that integrating the humanities involved in the learning process is key for enhancing the fruitful cross-fertilization between language and literary studies. The method strongly recommended by the Institution, rightly named the Department of Languages, Literatures and Civilizations (LLC), consists in encouraging the student to establish greater linkages between these disciplines taught separately for convenience but in essence complementary in the enhancement of cross-fertilization. Actually, very often, students in their grades race disregard the integrative perspective of these disciplines. The sciences relating to linguistics, culture, and literary theory and criticism, assumed to be complementary in the teaching and learning of language and literature, are more specifically targeted.

According to J. A. Cuddon⁵³ and M. Gray⁵⁴, linguistics is the scientific study of language. It involves analyzing language form, language meaning, and language in context. Its principal branches are etymology, semantics, phonetics, morphology, and syntax, all taught by the Institution. The linguistic sciences, added to the four basic skills (of reading, writing, listening, and speaking), are a valuable input for the study of language and literature, which share as a foundation the lexical unit of the word.

As for literary theory and criticism, it studies the nature of literature and the methods for analyzing literature through specific perspectives or sets of principles. It develops a work of hypotheses and a coherent conceptual set. For J. Culler (1983, p. 7) “literary theory is the servant to a servant: its purpose is to assist the critic, whose task is to

51 David Ian Hanauer, *The Task of Poetry Reading and Second Language Learning*, *Applied linguistics* 22/3 (2001), pp. 295-323.

52 Ian Butler, “A Brighter Future? Integrating Language and Literature for First-Year University Students”, in Amos Paran (ed.), *Literature in Language Teaching and Learning*, (2006): 11-25. Virginia: TESOL.

53 John Anthony Cuddon, *A Dictionary of Literary Terms*, Penguin Books, 1977. This revised edition 1979, p. 364.

54 Martin Gray, *A Dictionary of Literary Terms*, Longman York Press, 1984. Reprinted 1985, p. 114.

serve literature by elucidating its masterpieces”⁵⁵. It enhances our appreciation of literary works and provides instruments to help the critic provide better interpretation. V. Brewton’s overview of literary theory (2005)⁵⁶ goes even deeper into the trends: “Literary theory” reveals what literature can mean. It underlines the principles, one might say the tools, by which we attempt to understand literature. It develops the significance of race, class, and gender for literary study. It offers varying approaches for understanding the role of historical context in interpretation as well as the relevance of linguistic and unconscious elements of the text. Literary theorists trace the history and evolution of the different genres – narrative, dramatic, lyric – while also investigating the importance of formal elements of literary structure. Lastly, literary theory in recent years has sought to explain the degree to which the text is more the product of a culture than an individual author and in turn how those texts help to create the culture. In that perspective, our Department proposes to the students a wide range of theories: poetics, structuralism and poststructuralism, postmodernism, ethnic studies and postcolonial criticism, gender studies and queer theory, sociocritical theory of the text, stylistics, and semiotics, etc. Literary theory has changed the way we think about literature, language, identity, and society, and therefore provides a critical input for language and literature acquisition.

Concerning the civilization curriculum, it is worth noting that every language is defined linguistically as well as culturally. Literature for example provides access to the culture of the target-language speaking community. It is then one of the ways to understand the culture and traditions of the target language. This inter-cultural awareness hints at globalization. The cultural criterion treats literature as a cultural artefact. It acknowledges that the literary text is an echo of cultural languages and is determined by cultural references. Literature expresses cultural values and universal human values, and provides learners with deeper insight into human nature. It is an ideal vehicle to transmit cultural notions such as history, literary theories, and genres. Therefore, civilization courses increase the students understanding of the traditions, cultures, and ideologies studied, and equally come as a useful input for language and literature acquisition.

CONCLUSION

In short, the conjunction of civilization studies, linguistics, and literary theory allows students to have a good grasp of the mode of functioning of language and literature. This way, learning is facilitated, enthusiasm is stirred up, and cross-fertilization between language and literature is strengthened. Though the

⁵⁵ Jonathan Culler, *On Deconstruction: Theory and Criticism after Structuralism*, Routledge and Kegan Paul, London, 1983.

⁵⁶ Vince Brewton, *Internet Encyclopedia of Philosophy (IEP)*, A Peer-Reviewed Academic Resource, June 29, 2005, <http://www.iep.utm.edu/literary/> (Accessed September 2019).

active interaction between language and literature is now well established, the fact remains that the method expected to strengthen their complementarity is to be defined. As far as our Institution is concerned, it calls for the integration of the humanities taught, mainly the sciences relating to linguistics, culture, and literary theory and criticism, to mend the language-literature split and reinforce cross-fertilization.

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