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language or literature. The term is often mistakenly held synonymous with all the qualities contained within any form of mystical writing filled with obsolete words and archaic syntax. This is, as already discussed, usually not the case; literariness is that overall quality of a text which makes it different from samples of ordinary language. Definitely, the striking quality of literature that makes it different is the reader's response to it: literary experience (Spack, 1985, and Arthur, 1972).

One principal argument in the adoption of literature in ELT is that the literariness of the text should be maintained in the process of teaching it. There is discrepancy over how this main should be attained. The traditional view is that literariness is only maintained when the original intention of the writer of a work is elaborated and clarified (and probably injected) in the class. No ambiguity or divergence of opinion is left in this approach. In other words, no reader/writer interaction occurs in this approach. Hence, hardly any form of literary experience is achieved or even encouraged in this procedure.

The ultimate goal of literature is more than merely exhibiting eloquent words in pleasant structures; it is the communication of a feeling. Accordingly, the ultimate goal of language is the communication of a feeling or idea through the same means employed in literature: words and structures. The only difference is that literature, if correctly selected and handled in the class, would be more enjoying for the learners. And as long as learners are joyfully engaged in literary experience, literariness is being maintained, of course, for every individual learner in his own personal way: the one-to-one reader/writer interaction.

to know the learners in the class to a certain extent⁽¹⁾. A useful tip in this situation is that the teacher could resort to those literary texts which are less controversial and not too abstract. This is especially useful in the case of the multi-cultural class. There are some stories which are shared among many cultures in different forms and versions. In my opinion, they are very good selections to start with, particularly in lower classes. Some may argue that they do not really encourage the learners to become involved in them since they already know them. Quite the contrary, I believe - and have observed it practically - that the learners get a special kind of pleasure once they read a text and recall the time that they read this story in their own native language a long time ago, perhaps when they were at school: "We used to read this stuff in our own language when we were kids at school." It gives them a warm human feeling, a feeling of togetherness which may open those great big doors surrounding the foreign language and gradually permit the learner inside the new sociolinguistic arena taking away the debilitating feeling of alienation.⁽²⁾

As stated earlier, the first selection taken to class plays the decisive role in making the learner interested in literature. If the first text is suitable, the major step has already been taken, and the effect of a future *mis-selected* text would not be so colossal, that is, it could be compensated.

E. Maintaining literariness

By definition, *literariness* is the quality of being or resembling written

1 - Of course, there is no such thing as ultimate achievement of human communication in practice. However, some of it may be attained in the classroom between the teacher and the learner who have grown accustomed to one another. I presume that this level of human understanding would help the teacher make a correct guess about what may interest the learners.

2 - In Earl Stevick's words, "the language classroom can be a place of alienation for student and teacher alike." Human communication is simultaneous with the process of abolishing alienation; teaching, as one form of human communication, requires that the learner and the teacher who is the symbol of the foreign language get closer to one another.

no point in teaching a text which is verbally way beyond the learners' tolerance. Such selection may result in two disadvantages. First, such a text would hardly allow the learners to get involved in it since the prerequisite to the conceptual interpretation of a text is the linguistic comprehension of it. Naturally, the learners would not get the chance to interact with the writer and, at most, they would merely learn some words and syntactic structures, something they could have attained much more easily and readily through studying an ordinary text. Second, this kind of unrewarding experience may arouse the tendency in learners to go ahead and overgeneralize that literature is not a worthwhile activity: "Oh, no! Not another literary text full of useless words..." So the teacher must carefully analyze the text regarding its vocabulary and structural input before taking it to the classroom.

A second factor to be considered in selecting a text is the *substance* of the text. The idea underlying the text should arouse the learners' interest. Unfortunately, there are some "fatiguing" obstacles here. First, it would be very difficult to determine what kind of text would arouse the learners' interest effectively. For this, the teacher must be primarily involved with the learners conceptually, ie, he has to be aware, at least to some extent, of what goes on in the minds of the learners (something that even psychologists often fail to achieve). This problem is aggravated when the class is multi-national: people with different cultural background have difficulty in the ordinary language, let alone literature!

However impossible these problems may seem at first glance, they can be tackled in the long run. First of all, I believe that literature should not be taken to class on the first day; in other words, an ELT text should not start with a literary text, especially in non-advanced courses. Instead, the inclusion of literature should be postponed until the teacher has had the chance to get

cases several times and have come to the conclusion that the "*this is the way they do it which is obviously different from the way you or we do it*" Policy is the most effective one. It satisfies both the egocentric one-track minded individual who considers it a sin to learn about other people and the open-minded student who is eager to go and find out about what is happening on the other side of the wall.

D. The selection of a text

The most decisive factor in adopting literature in the language class is the selection of the text which could quite literally guarantee or abandon learning totally, there is nothing more euphoric than reading a text which is so pleasant that the learner simply forgets to look at his watch, and, yet, there is nothing more *suffocating* than having to drag oneself through one of those ultimately boring nonsensical texts which the great scholars have unanimously called a masterpiece but others may call a waste of ink. As Arthur delicately points out, literary experience is not self-induced, it comes about itself. It is not something you can buy from the book shop just round the corner, you either get involved in a text or not. And the one thing a teacher should not do, in my opinion, is to force the learners to get involved in a specific literary text. Teachers must learn to bear this fact in mind that although Shakespeare is magnificent, not everyone likes to read about the way the three daughters forsook their father and all died in misery. Furthermore, there is absolutely nothing the matter with a learner who does not indulge in a world classic; I mean to say that he should not be antagonized or considered as an uncultured student with a low IQ. On the contrary, there is something the matter with the teacher who tries to impose a classic on the learners who do not enjoy it.

To select the right text for the learners, certain criteria should be taken under consideration. First and foremost, the text should correspond to the learners' linguistic competence, that is it should be of a suitable *form*. There is simply

emphasizing in curriculum development.

It seems rather unrealistic or even cynical to presume that literature can never aid the learner approximate his occupational/academic needs. The least literature can do for the reader (and not just the learner) is that it could engage him in the reader/writer interaction thus providing practice for him to break down a text both linguistically and conceptually. As a result of this practice, the learner would face less problems when reading his own technical ESP texts.

Indubitably, the cultural perspective of literature *does* create a hampering effect in the classroom. As a matter of fact, it may turn out into an unpleasant experience especially when the point being made in the text is in sharp contrast with the cultural merits and virtues practiced in the homeland of the learners. However, careful handling of the situation can prevent potential arguments in the class and lead to the learners' better understanding of the culture of the people whose language they are eager to learn. This would quite naturally assist the learners in their real-life communication with the speakers of English. Let me elaborate this "careful handling of the situation" more practically. What I mean is that the teacher's role in these instances are of utmost importance not just as a teacher but more as a politician. Primarily, he should be fully aware of the very issue being discussed. The definition of "fully aware" strictly refers to *having had the experience himself* and excludes *having heard about it from others*. In other words, the teacher's elaboration must be genuine. Secondly, the teacher must maintain, at least superficially, his impartiality concerning the matter, that is, the learner who objects to a certain cultural point of the text must not feel that the teacher is actually propagating the idea himself, this may very probably lead to the crisis of teacher/learner antagonism which is quite realistically equivalent to the *annihilation* of the learner's learning. Personally, I have experienced these

accomplishing this aim - particularly in elementary levels. The words contained in a literary text, also, tend to be beyond the realm of the everyday ordinary language. The question is whether learners really need to learn such words and expressions to enhance their ability of using communicative skills.

Secondly, the study of literature would not contribute to the learners' academic and/or occupational goals. Intellectual and emotional involvement in writing and enjoying a literary experience is without hesitation quite a nice feeling, but what good is this nice feeling to a pilot who has to learn English to understand and send messages from the airplane to the airport? Can all learners of English afford to invest on learning to acquire literary experience?

Thirdly, the conceptual and sociocultural perspective of literature makes it difficult for ESL/EFL learners. Even if they surmount the linguistic difficulties of a text, learners would still be confronted with the problem of grasping the conceptual depth of that text. Again, can all learners of English afford to spare their time building up the mutual reader/writer interaction explained earlier?

Those who favor literary texts in the ELT class argue that literature will extend linguistic knowledge. Povey (1972) claims that literature provides evidence of extensive and subtle vocabulary usage, and complex and exact syntax thereby serving as a good model for increasing the learners' linguistic knowledge. Also, a Literary text contributes to the teaching of both language usage (through focusing on the particular grammatical points in the text) and language use. To use McKay's words, "literature presents language in discourse in which the parameters of the setting and role relationship are defined." One cannot neglect the sociolinguistic context inherent in any literary text, which could serve as a sound example of the authentic natural language context that many syllabus designers have been continuously

average lesson containing an authentic dialog between two old friends running into one another in the street is considered an "ordinary" text in an ELT textbook, but the lesson which contains a Sherlock Holmes in any form - original, extract, summarized, simplified, etc - is, by way of conventional practice, adopting a literary text in the ELT textbook.

B. Characteristics of a literary text

A literary text is usually believed to be a piece of writing which is deviant from the ordinary language by virtue of several linguistic and/or paralinguistic factors. A literary text may be identified by any of the following elements:

1. *Lexical selection*
2. *Structural ambiguity*
3. *Stylistic deviancy*
4. *Conceptual anomaly*
5. *Sociocultural remoteness*
6. *Esthetic appeal*

The common belief is that the above elements contribute to promoting the esthetic structure of a text which makes it all the more appealing to the reader and, consequently, more involved in the experience. At the same time, the above elements are at the heart of the controversy; both groups who favor and object to using literature for ELT purposes are mainly concerned with the characteristics of the literary text.

C. Literary texts: for and against

There are three common counter-arguments, according to Sandra McKay (1987). Firstly, Literature due to its structural ambiguity and stylistic deviancy cannot serve as an appropriate source for ELT. One of the goals of ELT is teaching the English grammar. The teacher would face major obstacles in

goal of literature which is self-expression is only accomplished through the reader's analysis and interpretation of the writer's words. Theoretically, there is no clear classification for literature, ie, it is not possible to say what is or what is not considered literature; the only real classification is the reader's personal category, that is, if you enjoy it, it is literature, if you do not enjoy it, it is just another piece of writing. The existing classifications are only arbitrary ones made for practical purposes. It is very much like a big *n* - story clothes store: there are articles galore on sale, you choose and buy what you like and without a doubt you have your own socially acceptable or unacceptable justification for choosing what you have chosen. *Beauty is in the eye of the beholder.*

II. Teaching Literature for ELT Purposes

A. The Language/Literature borderline

As stated above, there is no clear division between literature and language theoretically since the existing criteria with which literature and language are to be discriminated are purely subjective depending on the reader himself. A rather unorthodox distinction could be that a literary text is representative, ie, it represents the experience, whereas, a non-literary text is referential, it refers to the experience itself. On the other hand, there has to be one way or another through which literature can be identified. Otherwise, it would be impossible to go into the discussion of whether or not literature is to be used in a language classroom. The only remaining alternative is to agree upon a pragmatically valid definition, that is, adopt a practically sound method to distinguish literature from non-literature even though there may be theoretical deficiencies and/or contradictions encircling that method. Let us assume that literature is the collection of all the works known to "Literary circles": the literature section in libraries/book shops, literature periodicals, reviews, etc. *Literature is what the majority agree is literature.* Naturally, the

very extreme changes: what used to be nothing but trivial absurdity to me in my adolescence is at present the verbal embodiment of a world to come. George Orwell's *All animals are equal, but some animals are more equal than others* is yet another example of an utterance that was simply an interesting conglomeration of words assembled in a witty way to me fourteen years ago; now, it is the practical philosophy of life: the inborn discrimination of nature itself, the inevitability of the essence of segregation even in the concept of egalitarianism in the universe around us, These experiences are not very unique, that is, I am not the only person you could find around yourself who has undergone these kinds of experiences; they happen frequently to different individuals.

Literature is not created by a writer: it starts *from* the writer and is ended *in* the reader. To say that the writer must communicate with the readers, or vice versa, is simply a fallacy: the reader and the writer must share a mutual communication. To both understand and enjoy literature, the intellect and emotions should be focused on the story, this focus can only come about if the reader and the writer share the same background and experiences. As Bradford Arthur (1972) writes, the literary quality of writing is the quality of the reader's response leading to a literary experience which is a spontaneous experience that comes about in the process of the reader's total intellectual and emotional involvement with the writer's cause in the process of approaching the work. *Therefore, literature is not merely a product of the writer, it is a process in which the reader is as interactive as the writer in establishing it as a work of art.* In other words, one cannot talk, about a work of literature with the sole reference to the writer of that work. Literature only finds its righteous place when categorized and analyzed along the lines of the writer/reader interaction. In this sense, King Lear can be adored as the true manifestation of literary glory, or merely another boring old book filled with "thy" and "hath" (of course, depending on the reader). The

C. The writer/reader interaction

Literature, which is defined by some linguists as *deviation from the language norms*, is in one sense very much like language itself: to appreciate it, first one has to understand it. Consider the following extract from W. B. Yeats' *Under Ben Bulbin*:

*Measurement began our might:
Forms a stark Egyptian thought,
Forms that gentler phidias wrought.*

What I understand from the above extract is almost as much as I would gather from any randomly spoken Japanese utterance: virtually nothing. Would you expect me to be filled with a sense of esthetic appreciation after reading the above extract? Do you think I would sincerely agree with my literature instructor when he/she is admiringly talking about Yeats? I know it is a very bold unscholarly comment to make, but the works of Yeats are not literature to me although he is undeniably a great figure in the history of English literature. This is simply due to the fact that I cannot communicate with his writings. To give a better example, let me describe my experience with *To be or not to be, that is the question*. I must have been around eleven the first time I heard this sentence. The only thing that struck me then was that Shakespeare must have been a completely demented paranoid who had written this sentence in one of his darkest hours! Now, I consider that statement as perhaps the shortest most comprehensive sentence I have ever heard of. What has happened in these years to *Hamlet's* soliloquy which has made it so perpetually appealing to me? Nothing. It is I who has changed. My understanding of and attitude towards life has changed and this has caused a shift of interest. I have grown to be a virtually different individual with a totally disparate view and approach towards life in these years, and, naturally, my ways of entertainment and appreciation have undergone changes, at times,

not serve any other purpose than its own ends. A Work of art is not a means of political, ideological, moral, etc propaganda and should not be judged by any non-esthetic criteria. Several German writers of the romantic period - notably Kant and Goethe - are associated with the origin of this movement. The major implication of this standpoint is that art has no reference to life, thus, has nothing to do with morality. Oscar Wilde (1854 - 1900, the "folk hero" of the *art for art's sake* movement) aroused much controversy by writing that there is no such thing as moral or immoral art, a work of art is either well composed or badly composed and art is ultimately useless. Apparently, artistic commitment does not make the least sense in this approach.

The third view establishes a somewhat mutual interaction of form and substance. A writer of this kind is primarily engaged with a didactic plot but does his best to preach his ideas with pleasant words.

All three viewpoints share one common point: their attempt to create a work containing excellence of form and ideas of universal interest. It is every writer's wish regardless of being committed or esthetic to create a work which would be appreciated by more and more people, as many as all the people in the world even. Nevertheless, this is only an impossible dream since there is no one single set of criteria with which to evaluate the excellence of form and the permanence or universality of ideas. In other words, literature, not being a science, may not be analyzed in terms of a universally valid dichotomy between "good" and "bad" literature. What the critics do, ie, breaking down a work of art through what they claim to be a series of objective principles with which the quality of that work could receive anything from an honorable A-plus to a disastrous F, is nothing but a totally subjective and personal business (the word *business* is used here in its strictly literal sense).

There has been an on-going debate in literary circles over the priority of form or substance in literature. As a matter of fact, the origin of this debate goes back at least twenty-five hundred years in time to the era of the Greek Sophists. There are there different approaches regarding this matter. The first view is that literature is primarily substance, that is, literature - like all other arts - is first and foremost the expression of a thought, view, etc, through an esthetic form. Hence, form is considered as the means which contributes to the accomplishment of the main aim of literature: communicating an idea to other humans. Jean-Paul Sartre (1905 - 1980, French philosopher and founder of Existentialism) argued that the purpose of literature is struggling for the achievement of awareness, the liberation of truth, and the freedom of human, and that a writer is to be held responsible for the material that he writes since writing is in actuality performing an act. Sartre's view, which was also held by some other prominent writers such as Shaw and Brecht, is known as committed or *engagé* literature which is defined as the writer's dedication to the advocacy of certain beliefs. A good example of the extreme version of commitment in literature is the works of post-revolutionary Russia (Gorky, Sholokhov, etc). Consequently, a writing is not to be evaluated on purely esthetic grounds, rather, the message conveyed in the work is to be considered. It is this very view that categorizes literary works as being constructive or corruptive for the reader.

The second view maintains quite the opposite of the first one. The advocates of this approach make a stand for the priority of form to substance: the idea itself is not of primary value, it is the writing's being pleasant or not which counts. Associated with this viewpoint are the followers of estheticism, a school of philosophy and literature that emerged after the publication of *Aesthetica*, a treatise on the criticism of taste considered as a philosophical theory, by A. T. Baumgarten in 1750. This cult that won global attention in the 19th century entailed the point of view that art is self-sufficient and need

comparing to S2? Is it the choice of the words? It seems very unlikely. Consider the following examples:

3. *I had my tooth extracted two days ago but the pain still lingers on.*
4. *We built a fire on the beach but the flames are all long gone.*

Although S3 and S4 contain some of the same lexical choices of S1, they do not seem to demonstrate much literary beauty. Therefore, lexical selection is not the major criterion. Esthetic appeal is not an entirely syntactic matter either:

5. *The clerks have all left but the boss still stays on.*

S5 is structurally synonymous with S1; its literary value (if you can find any) is hardly comparable with that of S1's, though it may be an interesting managerial maxim! However, there is no denying the fact that the lexical choice and the syntactic structure of a sentence do play a key role in making a sentence excellent in form since form, itself, primarily consists of the interaction of words and syntactic rules.

The second aspect determining the esthetic value of a writing is its substance, that is, the point that it is trying to make. This point is usually ideological, political, social, moral, etc. For example, the substance of a writing may be highlighting poverty among a social class or the ruthlessness of a war. Substance is often developed with didactic intentions, that is, the writer may pursue the aim of teaching or inducing an idea, thought, or emotional status. Hence, he is employing literature only as a means of propagating whatever he has to say.

B. Commitment and the "Art for art's sake" view

The term literature in its more common usage refers to the body of written works produced in a particular language nation, age, etc, that contain excellence of form or expression and present ideas of permanent or universal interest. The second denotation of the term, which is found generally in academic circles, is the body of writings on a particular scientific subject. In the context of our discussion, the latter meaning is not of much relevance, it is the first category that is to be analyzed here.

Two integrative aspects are enveloped in the definition of literature: form and meaning (in actuality, these two constitute any kind of writing). It is a common belief that literature should consist of fine forms, that is, one way or another it should appeal to the senses in such a way that it would arouse appreciation.

*Of all those arts in which the wise excel
Nature's chief masterpiece is writing well*
(JOHN SHEPHERD, 1692)

In more technical terms, the first criterion with which a piece of writing may be evaluated as being literature or not is its esthetic value. Consider the following two sentences:

1. *The flames are all long gone but the pain lingers on.*

(ROGER WATERS, 1979)

2. *Although the war is over, its disturbing memories and effects still exist.*

As it is evident, the two sentences convey almost the same kind of linguistic message, ie, they are semantic paraphrases of one another. Yet the first sentence enjoys a construct which is more attractive than sentence two (if you are not convinced, ask yourself this question: which of the two would you like to go over again?). What is it that makes S 1 more esthetically approved of

ADOPTING LITERATURE IN THE EFL CLASSROOM

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There is much controversy at the moment over the adoption of literature in an English language teaching classroom. Whether or not we should include literature as part of the curriculum for ELT has been a source of inquiry to both teachers and theoreticians. A major reason for this incertitude is the seemingly inconsistent relationship of literature with the present goals of ELT, ie, practical communicative skills. This paper consists of two separate yet consecutively complementary parts. First, There is a brief discussion over the definition of literature itself, trying to understand what a literary text is. Secondly, there is a review of some of the on-going major arguments for and against the adoption of literary texts in the ELT classroom. Towards the end of the paper, the writer elaborates his opinion about maintaining literariness while usign a literary text in the EFL classroom.

I. Identifying Literature

A. Form and substance

In its broad sense, literature comprises two different categories of writing.

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