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ASSESSMENT IN TEACHING READING LITERARY WORKS TO UNIVERSITY LANGUAGE STUDENTS

The use of literature in the EFL classroom, as a meaningful and effective language learning tool, as offered by Maley and other scholars (Carter & Long, 1991; Carter & McRae, 1996; Montgomery et al., 2000; Simpson, 1997, 2004), who advocate the study of language and literature as naturally intertwined [4, c. 191], has been accepted and well-grounded by Ukrainian educators.

Recent studies demonstrate a renewed interest in using literature in the language learning (Daskalovska, Dimova, 2012 Hall, 2015; Matos, 2012; Paran, 2010) [2]. Several researchers claim the need to include literary texts into the L2 curriculum or alternatively advocate a content-based curriculum that would include literature components [6, p. 60].

Incorporating literature in the language classroom can be an effective way to provide a rich and reliable source of authentic language for students to learn and practise; support language development; serve as a springboard for discussions and other language activities; gain insight into the values, beliefs, and experiences of others and deepen cultural understanding among students; help students develop creative skills and critical thinking skills; be a source of inspiration and encouragement for students, to motivate themselves creatively through writing and other forms of artistic expression.

Various types of tasks designed to test literature in the language classroom correspond to the basic principles suggested by A. Paran [5, p. 153–156]:

- Include tasks to test "public knowledge" of the piece of literature learners have read (plot, background, character etc.), and also provide learners with an opportunity to show their private appreciation of it.
- Use a variety of different tasks: "public knowledge" is best tested through multiple choice, true/false, cloze texts, etc. while personal understanding and appreciation of the work can only be tested through extended writing or through creative reactions involving production.
- Ensure transparent criteria by informing students how their work will be assessed.

Recognition of the importance of imaginative and artistic use of language can be found in the CEFR (2001) in illustrative scales for assessing oral communication, reading comprehension and creative writing.

The updated version of the 2020 CEFR clearly emphasises the educational and aesthetic importance of creative texts, including fiction. According to the CEFR creative texts evoke a reaction, and there are four main types of typical response: engagement, interpretation, analysis and evaluation [3, p. 106].

Consequently, two different scales are offered by the CEFR in reference to the types of reaction to literary texts [3, p. 106–108]. The first one, which covers engagement and interpretation, focuses on the impact of a work of fiction on the student as a person. The second scale focuses on analysing and evaluating literary texts (including fiction). This scale is concerned with more formal, intellectual responses. Aspects analysed include the significance of events in a novel, the treatment of the same themes in different works and other links between them, the extent to which a text follows conventions, and more global evaluation of the work as a whole.

According to the CEFR levels, at B2 the student can compare literary works, expressing reasoned opinions and referring to the opinions of others. At C1 level, the analysis goes deeper, including examining how the work engages the audience, how conventional it is and whether it uses irony. At C2 level, the student is able to recognise subtle linguistic and stylistic nuances, identify connotations and critically evaluate the use of language and rhetorical devices in a literary work for a specific purpose [3, p. 107].

In the study, conducted at Taras Shevchenko National University of Kyiv among second-year students of oriental languages and literatures, students (77 learners) read English-language original fiction and translations of selected texts by oriental authors. Each work was accompanied by pre-, while- and post-reading tasks aimed at assessing the students' learning achievements. The main objective was the formative assessment of the progress made within the EFL course, where an exploration of the pieces of literature was intended to enhance the students' linguistic awareness, develop their imagination and emotions, and promote a better understanding of other languages and cultures. The tasks for assessing reactions to literary works included: language-based tasks, non-linguistic tasks, linguistic tasks involving L1 and L2, and tasks involving unseen texts [5, p. 156].

Students, especially those in the B2 and above groups, generally rated the tasks positively, finding them interesting and creative. However, in the groups with B1 and below, students had difficulties with the creative writing tasks, although they coped with the comprehension and language tasks. Students appreciated such an approach to literature that allowed them to compare their own culture with that of the language they are learning. Furthermore, the texts included topics relevant to students' lives such as family, love, propaganda, and war, making them more comprehensible.

Conclusively, incorporating literary texts into the EFL classroom proved to provide a rich and engaging context for language learning, facilitate transforming the language classroom into a more dynamic and meaningful learning environment. Thus, the inclusion of literature in the language classroom is an important and valuable aspect of language education, as it can help students to develop their language skills, attain their cultural understanding, and explore the human experiences through the written words. The tasks designed to assess reading of literary works should not only contribute to the development of students' linguistic and literary competence, but also stimulate their personal growth, intercultural understanding and creativity.

The further study may be related to the introduction of AI to creating tasks to assess literature. AI tools may be used to automatically analyse a text, generate answers to questions, explain and expand students' knowledge of a literary work. Providing creative tasks to assess students' reactions to literary works using AI technologies will help reduce negative consequences, such as loss of originality or copyright infringement, and will contribute to a more effective use of these technologies within the framework of academic integrity [1, p. 27].

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